THE SHAPING OF MODERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

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To Ruth and Phyllis

PREFACE

Christian theology is part of man's general process of thinking, deciding what to do, and speaking. Theology is itself such a process, both personal and in the community. It is continually being shaped anew, on the one hand by relation to its historic center in Jesus Christ, and on the other, by the formative influences of its cultural setting. The setting, too, constantly changes, not only from place to place but from generation to generation. Moreover, the process is one of both going forward and looking back—of doing, and of thinking about what has been done, and so forming new evaluations and decisions for the future. Thus theology, century after century, involves not only thinking, deciding, and speaking, but also giving reasons for the way we have done it.

A statement of the overall design of this book may be helpful to the reader. The impetus for it came from very specific needs of a theological curriculum. The problem was how to lead students into certain important subject areas, and also to develop a practicable method of approach to theology and ethics. We wanted to avoid anything like a stereotyped systematic theology, which would merely summarize and relate more or less abstract propositions and doctrines. And we are more and more convinced that the issues involved in systematic theology sufficiently overlap those in ethics to warrant unified treatment, especially at a basic level.

So we chose an historical approach, with the aim of drawing the student into theological and ethical reflection as part of the ongoing process—for the student, too—of thinking, deciding, and acting, and speaking of all three. Selections have been included from the main influential sources of the past two centuries. We have tried to let major issues and methods come to light in the midst of a lively give-and-take, in which traditional Christianity is in dynamic interaction with the culture of successive recent periods. We wanted to bring the student as quickly as possible to a point where he can test his instructors' mode of procedure over a larger range of thought, and undertake more self-critically the task of orienting his own thought and life within the various theological disciplines. The actual "doing" of theology (as the current phrase goes) and consideration of method may thus, we hope, merge in a single process. Reading suggestions in the footnotes and summary

chapters at the end of each Part will, if followed, acquaint the reader with the chief trends in contemporary Christian thought.

The present volume took shape in close connection with active classrooms. There was continual self-assessment by the author-editors, as well as modification in the content and design of the book. This was influenced by students, traditional sources, curriculum needs, and the habits and styles of thought that form our experience in culture. The selection of sources was at first quite broad, determined largely by hunches as to crucial moments in the immediate background of Christian thinking. Gradually the materials seemed to arrange themselves along the three lines central to this work.

The order in which we brought our sources into discussion began at first with issues of truth and went on to those of ethics and then history. But it became increasingly clear that this was starting at the wrong end. Problems concerned in exploring the idea of truth, or reality, proved abstract and hard to grasp—a classroom confirmation of the current difficulties in the area of "God-language." We were led, therefore, to a reversal, and the order that now prevails. This begins with history and moves on to questions of ethics (the whole axis of freedom/obligation/guilt/redemption/freedom) and then of truth. In a manner of speaking we have taken the three thrusts of Schleiermacher's definition of Christianity—monotheism (involving "God-language"), consciousness of redemption (freedom-language), and focus in Jesus of Nazareth (fact-language)—and have reversed the order. Yet we did not begin by intending this reversal.[1]

A Barthian tendency is reflected, again without original intention, in the fact that we retain in the book what amounts to a trinitarian focus: history (Son); freedom, or moving obligation (Spirit); and truth (Father).[2] On the other hand, we have refused[3] to concentrate so narrowly upon a Christological history that the more general meanings of fact, obligation, and truth lose any real importance in faith thinking. With very definite modifications, we have sought to recover the kind of cultural orientation that was the strength of Schleiermacher's approach to theology.

We continue to use the name of Jesus Christ as an inclusive symbol,

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[1] Partly this is a reading of Schleiermacher through Barth. More than most other contemporary Christian thinkers Barth has clearly maintained that "God-language" remains abstract apart from the historic name of Jesus of Nazareth.

[2] Although this type of trinitarianism runs through our analysis, we do not deal with any systematic complexities. Nor do we mean that issues clustered under the present headings can be neatly assigned to the various Persons of the Trinity.

[3] Reading Barth through Schleiermacher.

both for fullness of perspective and as the concrete point of unification between history, freedom (ethics), and truth. We might have used more traditional forms, speaking of faith's openness "to God the Father as known in the Son through the Spirit," but throughout our discussion have chosen not to do so. This does not necessarily mean that our own outlook is what has come to be called a "Christ-monism." The decision partly reflects the many unresolved problems as to the contemporary meaning of "God-language."

In returning constantly to the historic center of the Christian faith as the point both of unity, and also where diversification begins in our three areas of discussion, our effort has been to remain as concrete as possible in the use and focus of language. In the realm of secular culture Jesus of Nazareth, a man who actually lived and was put to death as a common criminal, is the recognized center of faith thinking, deciding, and speaking in the "Christian" world. There is no question of some vaguely traditional religious establishment merely carrying on its separate life in our society. Here, with the man Jesus, speech becomes historically direct and unequivocal; here language loses its oddities and becomes natural. Here, we felt, is the right kind of check upon the extravagance, inflation, and specialization of thought and wording that so often render the whole subject of theology impenetrable to the student and the reader. We have tried to maintain a certain simplicity of speech as we trace the striving of faith to understand and interpret the historical meaning, the freedom, and the truth of Jesus Christ in a changing world.

The focus on Christ sharpens the appropriateness of our order of subject matter. It moves, as we have noted, from history, with its personal model for Christian thinking and speaking, toward issues of obligation and truth, where models of value and being come to the fore. Jesus of Nazareth, in his earthiness and manhood, is for the Christian community the historic model who gives concreteness to its awareness of ethics and reality. Thus the order chosen involves also a language transition, from Jesus-language to freedom-language to "God-language," though with full recognition that in life they are mixed and fused. Our fundamental aim has been to develop a style of faith thinking that takes into account—is open toward—quite ordinary facts, obligations, and views of truth, in the light of the presence, power, and purpose of God as active in Jesus of Nazareth.

Where joint authorship and editorial work are involved the question of division of labor arises. We want to make clear that this has been a cooperative venture from the beginning, in both conception and execution. For the purpose of actually writing and arranging the various sections, primary responsibility was distributed as follows: Introduction

and Part II—Miller; Part I and Conclusion—Groff; Part III—Miller and Groff. But the overall design and specific content, no less than basic thrusts in the argument, have grown out of joint exploration both within and outside the classroom context.

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INTRODUCTION

FAITH AND ETHICS AND THEIR CULTURAL SETTING

Chapter One

THEOLOGY AND ETHICS: FAITH THINKING AS DIALOG

THEOLOGY IN PROCESS

Christian theology and ethics should be understood more as a *process* of thinking and acting than as a fixed set of accepted truths and moral rules. Study in the two areas involves such questions as "What am I to believe?" and "How am I to act?" Yet it would be wrong to imagine that the matter is settled when general answers have been given. The temptation is often felt to look for detailed systems of truth and conduct which (when made sufficiently concrete and thus supposedly convincing) are all too easily dismissed from the mind. Rather than any definite set of answers, what is needed is a *way* of thinking and deciding that will adjust to the constantly shifting circumstances of life.[1] What we shall do here is first to explore the nature of faith and ethics along these lines, and then in Chapters 2 and 3 turn to the current cultural setting in which such questions are raised. This will enable the reader to see just how contemporary issues themselves have shaped the approach used in this book.

No one can be really concerned with the "answers" of theology without becoming personally involved in a process of thought—that is, without considering his own approach to life. Once this personal level of analysis is reached, answers no longer seem so fixed or timeless. We have to work our way to them through many varied and puzzling situations in our own lives, modifying our beliefs as we go. This presents a parallel to modern science, where reconsideration and evaluation of findings are as important as the findings themselves. To focus on the

[1] See Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), for a discussion of theology and ethics as a "running conversation" and a "way of thinking"; also Gerhard Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith*, Ronald Gregor Smith, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961).

apparent results of science at any one moment, and ignore the openness to every relevant fact and principle that is part of the scientific method, would be more than a passing oversight. It would be equal to the loss of science itself. We believe that a somewhat similar openness is more urgently needed in theology and ethics than has usually been admitted in the life of the Church.

Theology is a way of thinking through the meaning and implications of the Christian faith. It is doubtful whether blind faith is faith at all. There are some who, from various motivations, prefer to keep their sense of religious truth and inner commitment clear of any sort of rational questioning. This anti-intellectualism is more prevalent than might appear at first glance. The result is that persons who have developed quite sophisticated views in other areas of life clothe their faith in naïve modes of thought and speech. But genuine faith is as courageous in understanding itself as in facing the major crises of life.

ETHICS AND FAITH

If theology, or faith thinking as it is nowadays often called, is faith in its reflective and analytical mode, then ethics is faith in its active mode. The first involves thinking about the meaning of faith; the other, deciding how to act. Yet decision and action can never be divorced from faith. As a way of arriving at right decisions of behavior, ethics is part of every theological enterprise. To ignore this either in language or in range of thought is to miss the full significance of theology. Any truly ethical reflection is already a theological one. For thinking—evaluating—in the very midst of responsible activity is part and parcel of the life of faith.

Every human activity takes place within the context of some sort of orientation or *way* of thinking. This does not mean that action can be reduced to the level of thought, as if it were simply an echo of what goes on in the mind. On the contrary, thought very often arises out of what we do rather than vice versa. But the meaning of an act is not something we can tack on after it happens; it is already there in the act itself. Thus to think about faith and meaning is to reflect on the significance of human activity. Because of this constant interplay between thought and action, the studies of theology and ethics are closely and basically related, even though not identical in what they cover. We are therefore treating these aspects of the Christian faith together rather than separately. They are so much interwined, in our view, that we shall often use the term *theology* or *faith thinking* in an inclusive sense. The ethical dimension is always taken for granted in it,[2] although in the

[2] Karl Barth and H. Richard Niebuhr, each in his own way, have given forceful arguments for the interrelatedness of theology and ethics. Relevant passages for Barth are to be found in *Church Dogmatics,* Vol. I, Part 2, sec. 22, 3; Vol. II, Part 2,

section on "Faith and Freedom" this dimension will receive special emphasis.

CONCERN, PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL

Faith thinking, we have said, focuses upon the questions "What am I to believe?" and "How am I to act?" Traditionally this has involved man in the exploration of the nature of what is true and what is good. It is doubtful whether one can ever really speak of truth without asking, "What am I to believe?" or of the good without implying "How am I to act?" Questions about belief or action which do not proceed from inner concern for the answers are essentially speculative and abstract. The real answers of faith are never independent of the one who is doing the inquiring.

It is true that these things can be approached with an attitude of simple curiosity about patterns of reflection, or about types of solution for certain problems, or about the way in which man's thought has developed. Curiosity is certainly a legitimate human motive for exploration. But if theology is studied at this level, in all probability its fuller meanings will be missed.[3] Faith thinking, whatever its range or complexion, thrives in the context of such basic elements in human life as loyalty, trust, and highly personal involvement. To divorce it from deep personal concern cuts at the root of faith itself. One does not have to go in for exaggerated emotionalism to know that faith lives in the area of man's deepest commitments. At that level the question of truth becomes the personal query "What am *I* to believe?" while the question of the good becomes "How am *I* to act?"

These questions also presuppose a community of concern. Every personal expression is likewise social. Even selfhood is possible only within a network of communal and cultural relationships, as is dramatically illustrated in the phenomenon of language. Individual selfhood is now believed to depend rather heavily on verbal ability, yet language is by its very nature interpersonal. A language symbol has significance between persons. It has meaning by reference to other socially shared symbols.[4]

The point may be made in another way. The question "What am *I* to believe?" is equally "What are *we* to believe?" "How am *I* to act?" is

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sec. 36; and Vol. III, Part 4, sec. 52, 1. For a discussion of Niebuhr's treatment of the question see Paul Ramsey *et al.*, eds., *Faith and Ethics* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957).

[3] See Ebeling, *op. cit.*, chap. 1.

[4] This view reflects a position developed most carefully by George Herbert Mead in his *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934). An earlier formulation of the social character of symbolism and personality is found in Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* Joseph Ward Swain, trans. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1965).

simultaneously "How are *we* to act?" Our feeling about truth and/or obligation in important matters comes to us closely linked to the intimate consensus of family, friends, teachers, writers we admire, and so on. And these questions as well as their answers are always spoken in a cultural and historical context: a time and a place, and a particular light of understanding. This fact cannot be ignored if either question or answer is to be properly comprehended. Even single words change their meaning from age to age, to say nothing of major concepts of life. The social context we grow up in imposes quite deeply felt obligations and expectations. A person's power to understand in depth and act responsibly is closely tied in with the whole social dimension of life. There is a oneness, an identification, between individual commitment and a committed community. This is true whether the community is that of family, friends, a political party, a nation, or a worshiping church.

DIALOG

This points up still another aspect of what we have begun to call faith thinking. The search for meaning takes place essentially as a moving *dialog*,[5] a give-and-take with the world round about. A concerned person finds larger, truer meanings in his conversations with others. This occurs not only in active personal encounter, but between the one who writes and the one who reads. Thus the men whose writings constitute the chief substance of this volume are in open dialog both with one another and with society. At the same time, they stimulate our own continuing interchange with faith and culture.

This general dialog includes both those who share the concerns of the Christian community and those who do not—both those for whom Jesus Christ is the central fact of history and those who understand truth from some other point of view. The men described and quoted in the following pages have been in close touch with the changing notions of reality of their respective times and cultures. And the central ideas and assumptions of this book, in turn, are in running conversation with changing conceptions of reality in the twentieth century.[6]

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[5] Martin Buber in his *Between Man and Man,* Ronald Gregor Smith, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948) has formulated a concept of dialog that has had great influence. A more popular statement is to be found in Reuel Howe's *The Miracle of Dialog* (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1963).

[6] In America both H. Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich have given impetus to the theological concern to be in dialog with culture. Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951) and Tillich's *Theology of Culture,* Robert C. Kimball, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) are important statements in this regard.

The outstanding trait of this approach to matters of faith is that it does not attempt to offer complete answers to vital questions. There is a mood of tentativeness, a willingness to settle—for the time being—for such partial consensus as may develop. There is a certain flexibility or openness toward earlier, traditional ways of expressing things, as these relate to interpretations now emerging. There is also an ongoing conversation between the old answers and new situations. The very awareness of the tentative character of any conclusion modifies the expression of it. Change is accepted more as a promise of new insights than as a threat of destruction to old and valued beliefs.

The modesty and flexibility of approach implied here can be detected on a number of fronts in twentieth-century culture. It originated, perhaps, with the fantastically fertile and far-reaching developments of modern science. These have proceeded from an attitude that welcomes change rather than shunning it. Findings are admitted only if they can be verified by others who accept the discipline. Even these conclusions, as we have noted, are then subject to constant interpretation and reformulation. Yet science itself finally rests upon a willingness to stand or fall by what objective data and phenomena have to reveal. There is a certain wholesome humility in this readiness to fit in with the way things present themselves to the open and receptive mind.

By the same token, the "conversation" in the realm of faith does not try to escape the thrusts and counterthrusts of Christian thought. Rather, it accepts the historical limitations of every effort of the Christian faith to understand itself through symbol and imagery—efforts to become aware of fundamental values and truth claims in the light of Jesus Christ. This approach reflects the confidence that the truth of faith can bear to be marked by the changes of history and still claim the lives of men.

Thus the dialog we have been describing is an open-ended conversation—never really finished—within the company of the concerned. It expresses our response both to the larger cultural setting in which we find ourselves and to our heritage from previous generations. In this sense faith thinking or theology is itself an *historical* kind of thing. It is deeply involved in changing perspectives on truth. It is responsible both to its own profound commitment and to the larger community. And it is a constant part of the moving "conversation" of historical development in the world.

Chapter Two

FAITH THINKING AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

The cultural setting in which questions of faith are discussed in our day has certain features peculiar to this century. As a preliminary to our exploration, we shall note briefly several trends which point ahead to the specific Parts of this book, focused upon history, moral freedom, and truth, respectively.[1] This brief outline will not pretend to be exhaustive.

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

One important trait of contemporary culture is its keenly sensitive *historical consciousness.* Men today recognize as few other generations have done that they live in the midst of a shifting social scene. There is an awareness that every idea currently held is subject to change and reformulation. In fact, change is more evident than traditional certainties in almost all areas of life. The international picture is a revolutionary one of many new groups making their impassioned bid for status and power. Asian and African nations in particular are striving toward new economic and political systems that will guarantee them world standing. Increasing industrialism and urbanization are the inevitable by-products of expanding technology and an exploding population. They suggest that the social flux barely revealed in these events will continue at an ever stepped-up rate.

But the real impact of historical awareness comes at another point. The present and the future are no longer generally looked on as being united with the past by myths or poetic visions conveying a sense of total pattern. The "demythologizing" tendency in modern thought goes on at many levels. The simple myth of the three-story universe has

[1] To supplement the following analysis of contemporary culture consult such works as William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1962) and Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965).

largely disappeared. The world is no longer imagined as sandwiched between heaven above and hell beneath, with a plate of land encircled by water between the two. Various theories of an expanding universe, a finite universe—perhaps even a "multiverse"—are debated and weighed. Meanwhile the older spatial mythologies fade into the background.

Myths concerning time are equally under attack. Ancient tales of the beginning of the world and of man are for many people being displaced or radically altered. So, too, are prophecies of the end of time and interpretations of the ultimate purpose of what happens in between. Physical theories of coagulation and collision have been suggested for the beginning of the world—total loss of energy or stellar catastrophe for the end. What happens between is now most commonly dealt with by theories of biological and social evolution. With man's age-old concepts of time and space under severe attack, traditional religious views inevitably come in for reconsideration. Are these beliefs, derived from Christian Scripture and tradition, so embedded in the myths of another era that they no longer speak with power to modern man?

The implications of a keen and disciplined historical consciousness will, as we shall see, appear more and more crucial as we go on. Contemporary Christian thought has already given considerable attention to the task of trying to understand how faith is related to history. Our sense of historical fact has become earthbound, and all genuinely historical knowledge is fragmentary and limited for the centuries that saw the birth and early growth of Christianity. In just what way can Jesus of Nazareth be the center of meaning, freedom, and truth for modern man?

PRACTICAL ETHICS

A second mark of our contemporary culture is a mood of what might be called *ethical pragmatism.* The world is more active and mobile nowadays than in any previous generation of men. The norms by which a person—or indeed a corporation—decides how to behave are correspondingly subject to question and doubt. With accelerating transportation and communication between all parts of the world, standards are increasingly thrown up against each other in contrast and comparison. We are aware of vast differences—between East and West, between conservative and liberal, between one race and another—in the concepts of behavior by which various peoples act and which dominate their cultural life. In some instances, as with China, such differences have their concomitant animosities, which underlie the most serious problems of international life.

Even Western civilization within itself no longer possesses the type of social consensus that prevailed in the medieval world, sometimes known

as the *corpus Christianum.* Although the comparison cannot be too rigid, the Middle Ages did have a general notion of where each man and group belonged and how they related to each other. Rulers had authority over the large landholders, and the landowners over the peasants. The guilds performed their respective tasks, and sons replaced their fathers in the same occupations. The Church had its legitimizing role and gave a kind of overarching integrity to the whole society.

That consensus no longer exists, and a number of ways of looking at man's functions in a technological-urban society are competing to take its place. It was once assumed that a cosmic plan or heavenly Providence rules our social structures and relationships. Today this is very generally ignored or forgotten. The whole attempt to define and regulate man's freedom by a metaphysical system is being abandoned by many. Just as the myths of time and space are disappearing, so are traditional ethical concepts. The idea of an eternal moral law that guides the activities of men no longer has the convincing power it had during thousands of years in the past. That the intangibles of human nature may have needs just as permanent as the requirements of the human body for oxygen, food, and so on, is a notion neither widely circulated nor accepted. For better or worse, human beings are learning to function without sharply defined assignments of place and task. And without the sanction of metaphysics. They are showing a sense of responsibility, without dependence on what appears to them more and more as the fiction of a total explanation of life.[2]

One need only mention such names as Freud, Marx, Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Camus to see how widespread has been the attack upon the older rationalizations, ideologies, and all relatively closed systems of thought. The latter seem to formulate universal laws and concepts without taking into strict account our everyday experience, especially in science. Modern life has begun to breed men who feel it would be deluding themselves to assume that they can accept a priori final solutions to problems of existence. They are themselves in the midst of

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[2] Criticism of the metaphysical outlook on life certainly reaches back as far as Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics.* Edmund Husserl, a founding father of the philosophical point of view known as phenomenology, considered that science to be "presuppositionless," i. e., not determined by standard metaphysical assumptions. Alfred J. Ayer, a leading thinker of linguistic analysis, begins his book, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), with a chapter on "The Elimination of Metaphysics," and goes on to say that philosophy is wholly independent of metaphysics and (by implication) theology. John Dewey in his *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1929) is another example of the "scientific" attempt to eliminate metaphysics. On this point see John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 255–57.

making slow and difficult partial decisions in limited areas. They are aware that unpredictable personal and social forces enter into every human act. Comfortably closed systems of thought, they believe, all too often turn out to be a screen for unwillingness to fight the hard battles of contemporary life, where human issues are urgent and painful. For these systems seem to make no provision for rugged testing by empirical experience.

Again, modern philosophical analysts are more interested in knowing how ethical language is commonly used in everyday affairs than in the possibility of developing an ideal ethical system. Some people use the word *ought* as an indication of personal preference. Others as a means of persuasion. Still others as a weapon to command those in their sphere of influence. The philosopher's task tends now to be seen as that of analyzing and clarifying this diversity of function, rather than constructing a complete system by which everyone can know how to act. Yet here again the mood of responsibility is quite apparent, even without the prick of metaphysical penalties or goals.[3]

The functional approach to personal and social relationships has produced more and more insistent mention of a "new morality." Need is expressed for provisional sanction of increasingly practical attitudes toward the life of man and society. There is a search, for instance, for an updated understanding of sexual relationships. This, it is felt, must take into account both advances in the control of human reproductivity and the enlarged freedom now open to conduct in so many areas. What is sought is some sort of responsible and genuine science of "human engineering," which will help to evaluate the constantly accumulating knowledge of the various social sciences. Society needs some means of guidance in its changing cultural patterns.[4]

In all this, important theological issues are involved. There is the question of just how faith is related to freedom of action. How can human inclination be ruled by our broader obligations, in the interest of *both* responsibility and freedom? How do the obligations affirmed by the Christian faith in Jesus of Nazareth relate to personal and social

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[3] See Henry D. Aiken, *Reason and Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), chap. 1, entitled "Moral Philosophy and Education," where he traces the development of philosophical analysis of ethical language during the twentieth century. Examples of such analysis may be found in Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944); R. M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); and Stephen Toulmin, *The Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1950).

[4] The impact of the "new morality" is expressed in popular fashion for Protestants in Bishop John A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963). The effect on Roman Catholic morality may be seen in the widely publicized reconsideration of the traditional position on birth control.

values seen in the more "realistic" light of modern times? How does the freedom of life "in Christ" relate to freedom of the individual as nowadays conceived?

SECULARITY

A third trait or mood in the current scene is what one might call a *chastened secularity.* By this is meant, among other things, a view of life in general that makes no reference to divine presence or control. To the extent that events seem understandable at all, they are understood without recourse to the "God hypothesis." Though man is increasingly aware of the limitations of his knowledge, it is of little help to him to fill in the gaps by an unknown divine total system. Too often, in the past, theological explanations of the causes of things have had to give way to those of science. The Church's insistence that Galileo repudiate his discovery of the moons around the planet Jupiter is only one of many notable examples. The developing secular mentality no longer feels the need of God as an explanation for visible and tangible phenomena. Nor does the secular man look for the kind of stabilizing symbols from which, in the past, he would have derived a clear sense of his own identity. Such symbols, provided by religious tradition, consisted of timeless myths, ethical absolutes, and what were assumed to be transcendent metaphysical truths. To the extent that our modern world has come to fit this general description, said Dietrich Bonhoeffer before he died, twentieth-century man has "come of age."[5]

It would appear that for growing numbers of persons, traditional religious explanations are no longer convincing. The old symbols and imaginative portrayals of what is ultimately real have been rapidly losing their capacity to orient and motivate. Nietzsche in his day could look ahead and announce that "God is dead."[6] The present meaninglessness of traditional Christian language for many persons serves somewhat to confirm his prediction that the religious institutions of society would become the "tombs of God."

Admittedly all this is truer for some than for others. Christianity as a whole is not remaining indifferent to the existing trends, and many signs of renewal are already beginning to appear. Still, for the average person the weakness of a great deal of the old religious language and ritual is a contemporary element that must be faced with honesty and vigor.

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[5] Bonhoeffer's pregnant and often epigrammatic suggestions about the religious situation of man in the twentieth century are found in his *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962).

[6] In the celebrated statement of the "madman" in *The Joyful Wisdom,* of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (London: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 167.

The emptiness of language about God closely parallels the demythologizing attitude toward biblical history and the desire to strip ethical responsibility of metaphysical sanctions, which we noted earlier. There is in all three tendencies a post-Idealistic temper of abandoning total explanations of life, whether historical, ethical, or religious.[7] The elaborate metaphysical diagrams of earlier times are being replaced by relatively modest accounts. Many thoughtful people are now content with something less than a complete plan of history from creation to the end of the world, and with a less than comprehensive account of moral obligation or divine explanation of truth. Such is the sobered attitude often found as part of the secular approach to life.

In philosophy, the linguistic analysts have quite forthrightly given up the attempt to construct an ideal metaphysical language. In their task of clarifying the meaning of words as commonly used, the attempt is not so much to get at the "real" meaning *behind* concrete usage as to be as clear and precise as possible about how words function in given settings. The philosopher then becomes a kind of midwife in the birth of new meanings, values, and truth claims in the midst of everyday existence.[8]

Thus in science, in philosophy, and in the three realms we have been considering, immediate and fragmentary objects of investigation have priority over elaborate theory. We see here once more, no doubt, the influence of an age of science whose findings come bit by bit, as instruments are created to make them. In these other realms also, if the formulation of general standards takes place at all, it is only in relation to the partial and more directly accessible data of life. Even then, the larger findings are constantly open to reinterpretation. In short, the emerging attitude is one of humble submission to the immediate elements of existence, and abandonment of more elaborate flights of mind and spirit into conjectural realms. The search for truth takes place in the midst of the fragmentary and the limited, in the modest belief that only here is it available to man.

This is a very great change in man's approach to serious thought. We shall need to explore the implications of such an outlook for central

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[7] For a penetrating discussion of the "post-Idealistic temper" of the twentieth century, see the introductory essays in Barrett and Aiken, *op. cit.*

[8] The thinker who, more than anyone else, has introduced this point of view into contemporary philosophy is Ludwig Wittgenstein. His Oxford lectures have been published as *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958). See also John Wilson, *Language and Christian Belief* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958); Frederick Ferré, *Language, Logic and God* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961); Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955); and John Hick, *Faith and Knowledge* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1957).

questions of faith and truth. How does the truth of Jesus of Nazareth, affirmed by faith, relate to the more earthbound claims and procedures of a secular age? How does the truth of faith itself function in relation to the truths of an historically conscious, pragmatic, and pluralistic culture?

The foregoing brief account is by no means a fully balanced picture. Certainly other quite different features of the current scene may also be relevant to faith. But they in no way diminish the importance of those just mentioned. A demythologized historical consciousness, a de-metaphysicized ethical pragmatism, and a de-divinized and chastened secularity are predominant moods of contemporary life. How long they will remain so in their present form remains to be seen. But until the passage of time gives us other elements to deal with, theology or faith thinking must enter into vigorous dialog with precisely these tendencies in our modern cultural setting, and must allow itself to be in some sense shaped by the ensuing conversation.

Chapter Three

ISSUES AND PROCEDURES

Before turning to the substance of our discussion, we must outline briefly the assumptions and procedures involved. The question of approach is in some respects as important as our conclusions, since we are stressing theological thinking as a process: an open dialog between present and past, between faith and culture.

The current tendencies or moods described in the last chapter herald the three main issues taken up in the Parts that follow. These are: (1) How does the historical fact of Jesus of Nazareth serve as a focus for contemporary faith? (2) How do the redemption and freedom found in him relate to modern views of human obligation and inclination, and their blending for the social good? And finally, (3) how does the truth claim that centers in Jesus relate to other intuitions of what is real?

These questions show an underlying connection, yet each has its own area of discourse, its peculiar language and range of problems. The realms of history, moral freedom, and truth are so closely interrelated that they can be distinguished but not separated. We shall see that certain elements of thought cut across these lines. For example, those who emphasize historical fact as merely secondary and illustrative in relation to faith are also apt to speak of the subjective necessity of moral law and the subjective nature of truth. Yet each field of discussion has an integrity of its own.

PROCEDURES

Our procedure in this book is first to listen to a writer who has given a typical basic focus to the problem at hand, and then to trace some of the ways of understanding it that have followed in the wake of this setting of the question. In this way the story can unfold with the least possible interference on our own part. The reader will quickly note that the contributors to the dialog are moved by similar concerns and are in conversation with one another from within their own cultural back-

grounds. Of course, the choice of certain voices to the exclusion of others is important in telling this many-sided story. But enough material is included to enable the reader himself to evaluate our selections and interpretations.

For each source reading an introduction is provided, with a brief biographical note on the writer. The preliminary discussion is mainly intended to sharpen the lines of the story and focus the issues involved. The selection is introduced in some detail in view of the strangeness of theological language to the average reader, complicated by translation and the unfamiliar style of other countries and an earlier day. Where appropriate, some additional details and ideas from the writer's other works are given to round out the presentation. It is hoped that the student will then, so far as possible, allow the selections to tell their own story, for only in this way can he hear the authentic voice of each participant as the dialog proceeds.

Each of the three major Parts of the book concludes with a "typology" and summary of the various important thrusts and counterthrusts in the developing argument. These represent recurrently discovered "answers" in the continuing conversation that even now revolves around these three issues.

Some may object that many writers are ignored and various points not mentioned. We have not aspired to completeness, nor have we conceived this book as a comprehensive history of the period. We have been carefully and self-critically selective. Above all, we have attempted to be faithful to the story as it emerges. If, in the midst of our own faith thinking, we have been even partially able to trace and assess important tendencies, emerging points of divergence or consensus, and basic shifts in the faith-culture relationship, our limited objectives will have been attained. Each selection was chosen because it is representative of still others. Taken together, they constitute the facts of the story as they have been impressed upon us, and reflect our value choices among many possibilities. Our thought has been shaped and guided by their provisional claims to truth. Although the story might have been told in other ways, it is our conviction that these particular sources do help to illuminate the kind of massive criticism now coming to the fore with regard to certain theological tendencies and habits of thought.

After presenting what amounts to the classic formulation of each problem for faith, we stay with the story long enough to see how faith thinking is refined, tested, and filled out as successive challenges disturb its dogmatic slumber. Finally we arrive at a new understanding of what is involved and a recasting of the question for our time. We are content with the limited task of clarifying these lines of discovery and development, rather than assuming that we can set forth total answers.

The type of historical perspective here provided gives an excellent background for participation in the contemporary discussion, and is concluded by a brief survey of current trends. It will reveal also gradual shaping and presentation of the author-editors' own views of a new style of faith thinking. The reader will find references in the footnotes and concluding summaries that will enable him to follow in modern statements the more recent shifts and tendencies of the continuing conversation.

COMPLEXITY OF TRENDS

It is hard, if not impossible, to illustrate the reformulation of a major issue as time goes on without the entire sequence of development to illuminate the process. A brief instance may serve as an overall example. Descartes located "truth" principally in the subjective certainty of selfhood. It was not long before other participants in the dialog, rejecting the notion of "innate" ideas, insisted that it is actually to be found rather in the existence of worldly objects. But the type of Christian thought that stems primarily from Schleiermacher, which has come to be called evangelical liberalism, seeks to parallel subjective and objective approaches to truth.[1] It assumes that human experience itself has an ethical and religious aspect that is a natural bridge between the "subject" of faith and the objective realm of culture, anchoring both sacred and secular in significant interaction between the two.

Others, notably Kierkegaard, found a hopeless contradiction between subjective and objective truth—the truth of faith and that of culture. This trend in the shaping of Christian thought, which now bears the label of existentialism, tried to reinterpret faith and its truth as a kind of paradox maintained in the midst of deeply personal involvement. Existentialism has provided a powerful perspective on the truth of faith in the twentieth century, as may be seen in the continuing influence of Bultmannian tendencies in theology.

Still others—especially Heidegger, Tillich, and Barth—have taken the matter in other directions. Truth is to be understood as a relationship between a person and his world in which a primal unity is uncovered at certain dynamically revealing moments. No longer is it a matter of how the subject is to find his way to the object. An underlying unity is assumed, and this unity is in the process of overcoming the apparent

[1] William Hordern singles out "evangelical liberalism" as the predominant type of liberalism, although he also finds humanistic, empirical, and prophetic types. Evangelical liberalism has consistently focused upon the centrality of Christ, the Scriptures, and the history of the Church, even when most ready to apply the severest critical methods of investigation. Cf. Hordern's *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955).

separation. The separation is relative, and is being gradually healed in outward life to match the oneness of the unseen substructure of existence. This view of faith, in varying forms, has been most pervasive in the neo-orthodox movements in recent Christian thinking.

The foregoing will suggest the closely related sequence of thought that gathers around a single issue as time goes on. Among recent trends in Christian theology, this volume will put the reader in touch with such major types as evangelical liberalism, existentialism, neo-orthodoxy, and the still more recent and formless theology of secularity. This is done less by descriptive summaries than by exploring selections from the developing story. As we move through decisive moments of Christian thinking shaped by successive participants in the dialog, the descriptive labels will take on greater clarity and meaning. Our task is to take part in the faith dialog and assess the developing options in such movements as we have cited. We hope thus to achieve more fully the openness and alertness to the living moment that mark an energetic faith, responsive both to a defining tradition and to the changing cultural scene.

This rough sketch of stages in the presentation may seem confusing to those who are just becoming familiar with the chief strands of modern Christian thought. But our main concern here is merely to alert the reader to the pattern followed throughout the three principal areas dealt with. After presentation of a typical, more or less model statement of the problem area, there is a survey of the possibilities successively developed. Finally the argument is rounded out and reformulated in contemporary terms—and also in our own. This does not mean that the issue is then closed. Quite the contrary. Contemporary Christian thought, still in continuity with its past, seems on the verge, or is already in the midst, of even more radical changes. These will surely uncover complexities and creative possibilities in relation to the issues explored here.

Our study ends with a conclusion which is presupposed throughout and which permeates our procedures in gradually emerging perspective: namely, that a new faith style is now both possible in our shifting cultural context and required by it. That style we have characterized as *responsible openness within historical change*. A clear view of what this implies can only be had later on. However, it is possible to say here that in this view faith's *historic* center is set in the ordinary factual world and understood in terms of developing interpretations. The *freedom* of faith lives in the midst of very concrete obligations and inclinations. The *truth* of faith is experienced through the various separations that tend to divide human life, seen as pointers to an underlying unity and more inclusive vision of direction, purpose, and possibilities for action. We do not presume to give all-inclusive theological explanations. But faith in the style of openness is both responsible to its own developing

life and responsive to new meanings and intuitions of the real wherever they are encountered. Such a faith respects them for what they are, but also seeks to understand and assess them in the light of the historical presence, ethical power, and truth claim of Jesus Christ.

PART I

FAITH AND HISTORY

Chapter Four

THE HISTORICAL ELEMENT IN FAITH THINKING

HISTORY—A LIVING PROCESS

We have seen that modern thought in general shows a marked development of historical consciousness by comparison with other periods in the history of man. This is no doubt partly owing to the refinement of research techniques. We have seen their effect in our recent, many-times-multiplied activity in such fields as archaeology, anthropology, textual studies, history itself, sociology, psychology, and so forth—not to mention straight physics, chemistry, geology, and astronomy. All these sciences have revealed detailed facts about the earth and human life that a bare fifty years ago were hardly beginning to be known. Partly, in turn, our greater historical awareness derives from our ability, in the light of these wider areas of knowledge, to follow human experience more closely and continuously than before. And this again has made us more conscious of situations where close knowledge of various human elements is not, in fact, possible.

The modern emphasis on history does not mean that we are paying more attention nowadays to a dead past. Rather there seems to be a new sense that all creation, from human thought itself to the very geological processes of the earth, is fundamentally historical. It grows out of something, and becomes something else. We try hard to understand the stages of growth in an embryo under the microscope, or the more visible but always fascinating and challenging development of our own children. And so we also try to follow and understand the living sequence in the larger sphere of human affairs.

History is a process, a dynamic movement of events and interrelationships. Thought emerges from and participates in it—is not a mere static by-product of what happens. Circumstances and ideas of government produced the Constitution of the United States. The Constitution, in turn, has had endless consequences for American life. These consequences, again, have modified our thinking and the Constitution itself.

Thought contributes creatively to historical development even while it is caught up in it. And faith thinking, or theology, is one brand of historically formed and formative thought.

Yet here at once a crucial issue arises. Christian theology is rooted in an historical person, Jesus of Nazareth; in an historical community, the Church; and in an historical collection of writings, the Bible. Does this mean that the objects of faith are different from other human events as we more or less accidentally come upon them? Vast areas of the life of mankind will be forever unknown to us. Other areas are known only through the brief record of a few personalities, sometimes only a single mention, or just the eye of the expert upon a mute detail: an earring, a coin, a house, a tax list. For later centuries, sometimes also books, letters, manuscripts, portraits. There is an ever-increasing number of avenues to knowledge of the past.

Moreover, about most historical persons and happenings time normally brings changes of perspective, a varied range of opinion, new discoveries of research material, and so on. But the Christian faith affirms in Jesus of Nazareth a unique source of freedom and truth for the life of man. What is the real status of this person-event as compared with other historical events? Are there any elements that make it necessary to consider it differently? If so, what are they? And how should it be considered?

In other words, how is Christian faith related to history? It will be appropriate to begin our many-sided story precisely at this point.

THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE

First, however, some additional observations are in order. Discriminating thought presupposes *language forms.* These arise from experience and very rapidly in turn become the means for grasping experience. It is true that memory may recall a great variety of things, and especially aspects of things, that are nameless. This is obvious when we compare the limitations of vocabulary and personal knowledge with the infinite complexity of the world and human life. Take even so simple a thing as color: the everyday vocabulary for color is relatively small. But the color-sensitive person will perceive an enormous number of shadings and combinations to which no name can be given at all, beyond the description of where they occur or some such general term as, say, "light green" or "greenish."[1] Yet the sensitive person can reproduce them in paint or identify and remember them in fabrics, wallpaper, or the outdoor world.

[1] A recent newspaper item notes that the Vatican manufacturing plant for mosaics has at its disposal 28,500 different colors—"though some are no longer in use" (*New York Post,* June 7, 1966).

Nevertheless, language is the vehicle that permits exchange of thought and pins down meanings amid the flow of events. It creates a certain coherence in experience even while it is going on. It arrests attention at this or that idea or thing, by expressing it, and establishes connections with other thought and other people. Language helps development of thought by making comparisons, attributing qualities and definitions to things. It gives continuity to meaning in the shifting stream of life. The forms of language, and of thought, do not serve as timeless essences only externally related to the historical process.[2] They are tendencies or expanding boundaries within change itself. When we use a word so obvious as *man*, for instance, it is certain that we mean not only the same creature, but at once something less, more, and different in total connotation from what Aristotle meant by a similar word in Greek. The miracle of language enables us to take hold of this center of meaning that was there for him twenty-three hundred-odd years ago, and try to feel how he thought of it, how later thinkers and other generations have thought of it, and what we mean by it ourselves.

If this is true of so plain a meaning (or idea, or thing) as *man*, how much more so must it be in the case of the complex and subtle intangibles perceived and evolved in the course of human experience? *Love*, for instance, which is a central meaning of the Christian faith? Or *faith* itself, and *fact*, and *truth*, and the many shades of meaning these words convey? Thought and language, in other words, are themselves in process of development, just as experience is, and as part of it. Some elements of our personal existence change while others endure through the events of time. In the same way, thought and language are drawn into new meanings and/or used to stabilize old ones. They may, in fact, nourish both complementary and contradictory ideas, as life gives rise to them. Language marks the changing frontiers of man's capacity to understand, and is thus part of his very nature. And by his understanding he constantly modifies his own life.

MAN AS HISTORY

Man is an historical being, moreover, in two related ways: he *has* a history, and he *is* a history.[3] To say he *has* a history is to take his identity,

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[2] See Austin Farrer, *Finite and Infinite* (Westminster [London]: Dacre Press, 1943), especially chap. XXI, for a related argument, although less specifically applied to the matter of faith thinking. He contends that it is no longer possible to think of "form" as some kind of timeless essence riding on the back of change. Rather, it is to be thought of as the "expanding charter and goal of activity as such."

[3] A view somewhat parallel to the one we are developing is found in Gordon D. Kaufman, "The Imago Dei as Man's Historicity," *Journal of Religion*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (July 1956).

his selfhood, as the center that moves through change, retaining its core of sameness. We see this person growing up, going to school, marrying, making a career, even growing very old. He is shaped by inherited factors and by his experience. We note in him a certain consistency of attitude, character, and purpose, and when we claim to know a person pretty well this is what we have in mind. However far in the past our first meeting may have been, the kernel of sameness remains. We recognize the person we once knew, whom we know now, and whom we expect to recognize tomorrow.

But man *is* also a history as well as having one. He may be defined as process pure and simple. Here the emphasis is on the sequence of changing experience and developing character within the framework we recognize as nominally the same person. At any one moment, he is not simply a collection of ingredients that add up to a human personality, like a casserole of a certain flavor. Everything in him—body, mind, emotions, purpose, total experience—has a past and a future as well as a present. Everything in him changes, is on its way somewhere. His life is a dynamic mingling of elements: past accomplishments and future intentions, old habits and new enterprises. He combines established ideas and language, and the beginnings of new imaginative and symbolic patterns waiting to be shaped in time ahead.

Moreover, he is a being in community. Man's existence is bipolar. Life for him is made up of both the "I" and the "me,"[4] both the self and the social world in which it swims. Life is both individual and communal. Neither pole can be reduced or severed from the other. Individual man thinks and speaks, but the community also thinks and speaks in him. He recalls and anticipates; through him the community does the same. Single man projects himself toward goals and sometimes achieves them. But in these goals the community also triumphs and fails and commits itself. The individual is known both for his habits and for his unpredictable spontaneity. And through him the community becomes both institutionalized and newly creative.

The story set forth in the next three chapters will illustrate and, we hope, clarify what we mean in saying that experience, thought, and language are rooted in man's nature as an *historical* being. We shall see how various Christian thinkers take on individual styles of thought and speech even as they borrow from a common tradition. Their creativeness

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[4] From George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934). He develops a view of the "self" as social process marked by individual and communal poles. Similar analyses are to be found in John Macmurray, *The Form of the Personal*, Vol. I: *The Self as Agent* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957) and Gordon D. Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

depends on possibilities already present in the community of faith, with its constant interchange. Inversely and at the same time the community finds new expression, new awareness of reality, through these individual centers of creation.

HISTORY AND FAITH THINKING: THREE ISSUES

As man is by nature an historical being, so faith thinking or theology is an historical form of thought centered in a significant cluster of loyalty, purpose, and meaning that guides human life.[5] For the Christian community, that center of "ultimate concern" is Jesus of Nazareth,[6] whose meaning for the world was received, remembered, interpreted, and transmitted to succeeding generations by living witnesses. The words of these witnesses constitute Christian Scripture and Church tradition.

Thus the faith symbols and imagination that enter into articulate Christian life are rooted in the everyday experience of a man who lived, thought, and spoke even as other men.[7] Whatever else may be considered essential to faith, the fact of his death on a cross, which stands at the center of this person-event, is what ties this faith into the experience of the culture in general. And our task as Christians becomes that of understanding present life in the light of this historical person—as a present reality in human affairs, as a source of ethical power and guidance, and as a criterion by which other intuitions of basic truth and purpose are to be measured.

In other words, it is the historical reality of the man Jesus that gives concreteness to Christian life. Within the range of human culture touched by Judeo-Christian influences, this person-event has had a continuing

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[5] Drawing upon such men as Tolstoy and Royce, H. Richard Niebuhr has done a great deal to clarify the nature of faith as fundamental loyalty and value commitment always closely tied in with culture. See especially *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

[6] The quoted term is from Paul Tillich, who has helpfully insisted that faith is a "centered act" of the total personality, not reducible to any single element such as emotion, will, or reason. See his *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958); also chap. 13, sec. vi of the present volume for a major selection from that work and a discussion of his contribution.

[7] Here and elsewhere we use the phrase "faith imagination." This term will seem less strange if it is remembered that thinking is itself imaginative in character. It presupposes the ability to remember and reflect, to project ahead to what might be, entertain a variety of hypotheses about given aspects of experience, to discern analogies between this and that. We have such characteristics of the thought process in view in using this term. It should be clear that we are not thereby referring to some sort of fanciful dreaming. The faith imagination is made concrete, rounded out, and reality-tested precisely in relation to Jesus of Nazareth and the fact that he lived a real earthly life.

dynamic effect upon human thought and action. From the first he has given rise to thought and language forms that are inextricably bound up with the values of Christian culture. We shall examine three of these language-orientations—those concerned with history, ethics, and truth—and make some effort to assess the changing meanings behind them as the story progresses. Each is a basic aspect of the relation of faith to its historic center. Each involves an intermingling of inherited thought and speech with adaptations to a changing cultural context. Each has functioned as an organizing factor, creating a field of human attention, and thus an institutionalizing drive within life.

The first of these language- and meaning-orientations is the basic historical *fact* of Jesus of Nazareth and the form of faith thinking shaped by the events of his life and his death on the cross. However specialized the language of our discussion may become, particularly in the selections that follow, the central issue can be posed in quite direct terms. How are we to understand the relation of *faith* to the *fact* of a man who lived and was subjected to death on a cross?

THE FAITH-FACT ISSUE

Although "faith and history," or more sharply, the "faith-fact issue"—is one of the three main orientations considered in this volume, and is specifically treated in the present section, we may note that it has an umbrella sort of significance extending over the other two areas. For the historical nature of both man and faith thinking itself, as well as of the very center of our faith, has a major bearing on those topics as well. One's conclusions about the faith-fact issue, whatever they may be, will inevitably affect the other phases of thought. When we come to the nature of truth, this in turn has its broader repercussions. We shall see from the first that the three orientations are so closely interwoven that it is not always possible to defer speaking of one until another has been dealt with. In our selections the unity of the three aspects will be very evident, and the reader will often have to bear it in mind.

In the Christian faith Jesus has proved so significant that lofty claims, language, and patterns of interpretation have at times threatened to blot out the ordinary modes of speech that would be usual in touching upon actual historical persons. And in modern Christian thought the question of how faith relates to fact has been so shaped as to appear in terms of a fairly sharp break between the two. This first became clear with the development of critical historical studies, which tend to anchor all knowledge of fact firmly within the range of ordinary human life—the "temporal process"—as opposed to miracles, prophecies, or revelation. That is, any too-readily assumed contact with eternity and/or any sort of

elevated metaphysical definitions or speculation. An effort began to be made to discover just how firmly our faith is indeed rooted in historical fact. This presently took the form of the so-called "quest of the historical Jesus."[8] Explorations along this line helped to free the picture of Jesus from various encrustations of dogma that threatened to obstruct the freedom of any responsible historico-critical study of the Bible.

The same fact, however, may be used to support quite different interpretations, and may be further camouflaged by conjecture and uncontrolled imagination. The movement toward clear historical accuracy soon fell prey to weaknesses of its own. The *Lives* of Jesus produced during this period often set up their own quite nonhistorical standards of "true faith." They would locate this deep tie to the divine in the sphere of ethical fortitude, or general rationality, or some unchanging certainty derived from special aspects of accessible fact. There has been great doubt and difference of opinion as to how far we are really able to penetrate to genuine historical fact behind the many-faceted interpretations that have arisen.

One suspects here a tendency in Christian thought to draw back from its own discoveries as to Jesus' human life. Historical study began to render glimpses, for instance, of Jesus as a fanatical apocalyptist, himself mistaken as to the imminent coming of the kingdom of God. Where the tie of faith to earthy fact resulted in such embarrassment, the dominant drive was to find some kind of nonhistorical center of stability and guarantee for the life of faith.

Historical study also helped to show that, whatever its roots in ordinary experience, faith does not spring directly from fact. Even Jesus' contemporaries were unclear about the significance of his life and ministry. Scientific techniques in the study of the Bible have suggested that a radical shift in insight and affirmation took place among the disciples after Jesus' death on the cross. Here again historical change has had to be faced, this time within the canonical writings themselves. This, too, proved embarrassing to a style of faith geared to absolute certainty.

NEED FOR CERTAINTY

All these developments have made it natural for Christian thinkers to try to locate their major certainties in some area other than mere external historical fact, which came to seem a rather unstable foundation for faith. In the presence of this awkward tie to earthy historical happen-

[8] For a survey of this movement, and its abortive demise, see Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961). Current efforts to take up the "quest" from a different base are briefly described below on pp. 164–165.

ings, and the consequent split in the stream of Christian thought between clear faith and a clear sense of fact, various options or possibilities of outlook began to appear. This did not happen all at once, but we see the start of it even in Lessing, who first lucidly articulates the problem. Some of the emphases settled on by thinkers of the last two centuries as the validating element, or point, or "moment" of Christian faith have been as widely diverse as "moral experience," "universal reason," feeling at a certain level of depth, passionate existential decision, and divine gift and revelation from beyond. Some, on the other hand, have concluded that real faith is merely the reflection of a universal religious or ethical certainty, rooted in every human being.

Nor has the view of the problem itself been any more steady than the answers to it. There has been a discovery of new facets and a swinging to opposites, such as one might expect with successive thrust and reaction of thought. Some see fact and faith as almost continuous, others as in permanent tension and paradox, still others as a unity under or beyond the apparent opposites involved. We shall follow this story through source readings which will acquaint us with typical motifs and tendencies, ranging from early evangelical liberalism (Schleiermacher) and existentialism (Kierkegaard) to modern neo-orthodoxy (Barth) and beyond.

Chapter Five

THE FAITH-HISTORY STORY

Down through the centuries Christian thought has been concerned about the relation of faith to the fact of Jesus of Nazareth. This is not simply a modern problem. We shall begin our story with Lessing, but without in the least meaning to imply that this is where it started. The chief contributors in our series are taking part in a long, ongoing conversation that has continued over many generations, concerning the Bible and tradition, canon and creed. Lessing was selected as a point of departure because during his lifetime and in his thought a rising historical consciousness gave vivid shape to the faith-fact issue.

Our purpose now is to unfold the developing relation of faith to history from Lessing's time in such a way as to note emerging trends of thought together with something of the continuity of the movement. We shall see how this question has been posed and handled in successive periods. The order of presentation of the various thinkers will be chronological, with a few exceptions to permit the thrust and counterthrust of particular lines of thought to come out clearly.

1. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

1729-1791

German writer and theologian. Born near Dresden, one of twelve children of an orthodox Lutheran pastor. Famous classical dramatist, prolific writer, translator, editor, and critic. Lived and/or studied successively in Leipzig, Wittenberg, Berlin, Breslau, Hamburg, and Wolfenbüttel in Brunswick. Revolutionized literary criticism in Germany. Engaged in prolonged theological polemics. Helped to launch critical biblical studies that still affect Christian thought. An early spokesman for Enlightenment concerns. Often raised the question of how faith can be based upon miracles and prophecies that seem increasingly improbable to a man of intelligence. His last play, Nathan der Weise, *was both a plea for racial tolerance and a denial of the uniqueness of Christianity. He believed in the "Spirit and power" of the moral teachings of Jesus as the fundamental truth of the scriptural accounts.*

"Only a part of our youth should be given to the fine arts; we have to exercise ourselves in more important matters before we die."

"The true Lutheran does not wish to be defended by Luther's rights but by Luther's spirit; and Luther's spirit absolutely requires that no man may be prevented from advancing in the knowledge of the truth according to his own judgment."

"If God held all truth in his right hand and in his left the ever-lasting striving after truth, so that I should always and everlastingly be mistaken, and said to me, 'Choose,' with humility I would pick on the left hand and say, 'Father, grant me that. Absolute truth is for thee alone.' "

In a basic and skeletal sort of way, Lessing expresses the problem of faith and history for us in terms of his own concerns. How can "accidental" historical truths be the bearers of ultimate meaning for human life—of ultimate reality? How can our eternal destiny depend upon anything so unstable as our *knowledge of history?* His wording is slightly different, but the fundamental question soon begins to appear. Lessing's perspective on the faith-fact relationship is in terms of the "necessary truths of reason" as opposed to the "accidental truths of history." But it

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Lessing's religious writings include his edition of the Fragments From Reimarus *and an essay entitled "The Education of the Human Race." The latter and several other articles are conveniently collected under the title* Lessing's Theological Writings, *Henry Chadwick, trans. and ed. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1956).*

will not be doing violence to his thought if we continue to speak of faith and fact as parallels to what he means by these truths.

Lessing's terms plunge us at once into an intellectual climate about which a word or two of background may not come amiss. The Age of Reason, the Enlightenment, of course attributed to *reason* the power of logical thought that is its chief meaning to us now. "Have the courage," said Kant, "to make use of your own understanding." But this movement also had an aura of meaning that we are apt to convey by such words as intuition, values, conscience, integrity, feeling (though the Enlightenment set its face hard against unreasoning and superstitious emotion). When we speak of a "rationalization" by which a person deceives himself, this is not what the Enlightenment would dignify by the lofty name of *reason.* To the "rationalist" philosophers, reason was something profound, genuine, deeply sincere, as opposed to the feeble or ignorant acceptance of orthodox, often sterile, tradition and authority. *Reason* meant to think and feel things out for oneself and not accept them slavishly, like a parrot or a puppet, from others. An overtone of this meaning was: to have courage to speak and act on reason, in defiance of authoritarian pressure. It was a discovery of man's integrity within himself, as opposed to authority in the realm of thought—the legacy of the Middle Ages.

Another point of background: to the modern mind *history* usually means the real thing, the real past life of mankind. If we speak of the "truths of history" or "what history teaches us" we have in mind (we suppose) events that really occurred. Offhand, "accidental truths of history" is a puzzling, even meaningless phrase. We believe in cause and effect. No human incident, however small, is thought to occur without this law. "Accidents"—? But when we think of history as the reported *version* of things, merely, then "accidental truths of history" become understandable, especially in an age that lacked our many modern means of research and verification. The reader will do well to keep in mind this duality of the meaning of *history,* for the thinkers we cite speak now of one, now of the other, and do not always clearly specify.

In the following selection Lessing goes directly to the heart of his own difficulty. Knowledge at second hand is useless when it comes to providing a vital demonstration "of the Spirit and of power." The long span of history is one form of distance, true, but the more decisive distance is the bare fact that we do not ourselves witness an event. The moment an event is hearsay—no matter how close by—we are up against what is to Lessing a merely "historical" truth that depends wholly on the reliability of others, however respected. He examines this kind of truth at some length, noting its inappropriateness to *prove* the vital principles by which we are willing to live or die. He then comes quite simply to the kind of proof he feels he can accept.

Why is Lessing preoccupied with the rift between faith and fact, even in his own terms? We have no cause to imagine that he wishes to belittle the significance of Jesus of Nazareth for Christianity. In his own way he makes this very clear. His sharp sense of this gulf, or separation, may be seen in part as a turning away from a certain sterility and tyranny in the orthodox outlook of his day. Orthodox insistence on rigid dogma and conformity, on the unquestioned authority of miracles and fulfilled prophecies, he was sure did not reckon adequately with the ceaseless flow, change, and limitation of all historical events and knowledge. It is one thing to argue for the genuineness of Christ's miracles and fulfilled prophecies. It is quite another to demonstrate them in everyday life. Real faith so far as we know it (Lessing believed) owes less to the traditional accounts of wondrous things once done by Jesus than to manifestations of Christ's spirit and power in our own time, where we can see and feel it.

Lessing finds it hard to think of "historical" fact as anything vividly real. It is a testimony—but of what use, if the immediate "proof of spirit and power" that touches and convinces our own spirit is lacking? He admits a certain kind of knowledge derived from what is handed on, but between any secondhand reports or impressions and the real experience necessary to faith there is a "great, broad ditch." Christ's fulfillment of prophecies, performance of miracles, even resurrection from the dead, remain only "historically certain." These traditional events have no claim to universal or inevitable meaning, since they apparently cannot be reproduced in our day or our own lives. Between such "historical certainty" —given us in Scripture—and the certainty of faith yawns an impassable chasm. Lessing expresses it by the dictum: "Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason."[1]

The chasm between what is historically "unobjectionable" (accepted as historically certain, on the authority of the "best of historians") and immediate experience that we can trust by direct awareness, has also another source. Lessing shares an outlook found in others of his time, the period not only of the Enlightenment but also the Romantic Move-

[1] Note that "historical certainty" as used by Lessing (with a faint note of irony) means the unverified version of the historian, whereas nowadays we would use such a term only for carefully verified facts. However, Lessing's meaning and intention is clear. It is interesting to note the real *certainties* of Lessing's day and thought: the certainties of the inner man, the obviousness of what was clearly felt, as for instance moral obligation. This was before the psychological and psychiatric explorations of our own time, and before the apparatus of historical research had become so formidable in its power to verify or discredit. Certainty was an inward thing, and the stream of external life appeared haphazard, chaotically uncertain and unreliable. The modern feeling, by contrast, is of inward uncertainty if not chaos in many respects. Meanwhile fairly reliable means exist of pinning down outward fact in the ordinary stream of cause and effect, if one has any access to the appropriate data.

ment. It was a period whose sense of reality was lodged in the directness of such notions as "pure reason," "universal morality," and immediate feeling and experience rather than what appears as a chain of mere accidents of transmission and the gross untidiness of accumulating historical "fact." This feeling still expressed, no doubt, to some extent, the stirring of the individual in his new powers after the meek obedience to authority of the Middle Ages. We see here a terrible inability to swallow down what is spoon-fed. Only real experience can qualify.

Lessing anticipates the modern temper in recognizing that life is borne upon a ruthlessly external stream of time and shifting events. He tries hard to distinguish between what is essential and what is incidental to faith. The appearance of miracles and fulfilled prophecies may have had major significance (he suggests) at a time when Christ's ethical teaching was first making its way into human consciousness. For it called attention to his teachings, which were new and strange. But that time has passed. The ethical teachings themselves are now the center and substance of our faith and continue to claim the allegiance of enlightened man. Yet the myths that launched and justified them have lost their brightness for us. Truth is truth, and remains so even if brought to light by myth, imagination, accident—or even falsehood.

It would be wrong to suggest that Lessing really divorces faith from fact. He realizes that the "necessary truths of reason" do not come to us absolutely, apart from the "truths of history," however untidy. He does not dispute the specific connection of Christianity with a real Jesus of Nazareth, especially in the teachings. Nor does he suggest that faith is a matter of inner disposition, somehow illustrated in a secondary way in external facts and happenings.

But he feels sure that whatever is *only* historically known—a second-hand story, if only as far as the nearest neighbor—is *contingent* and not essential to faith. He sees a gulf here between modes of knowledge. Historical record of any sort seems to him quite different from such sweeping universal claims as that Christ is the Son of God. One cannot manufacture one out of the other. Faith, as he sees it, cannot anchor its more specialized claims in the realm of past fact, of which our own view is nothing but flux and change. Stability and certitude must be looked for elsewhere.

The following selection from Lessing was written in 1777. He had been publishing fragments from the unpublished work of the late Oriental scholar Reimarus, whose denial of biblical accuracy in various respects, including the resurrection, stirred orthodox circles to protest. J. D. Schumann of Hannover restated the traditional authoritarian arguments of miracle and prophecy in a courteous essay entitled, "On the Evidence of the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion." Our selection is Lessing's famous answer.

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ON THE PROOF OF THE SPIRIT AND OF POWER

TO HERR DIRECTOR SCHUMANN AT HANNOVER, BRUNSWICK, 1777

Sir, who could be more eager to read your new work than I? I hunger for conviction so much that like Erisichthon I swallow everything that has even the appearance of nourishment. If you do the same with this pamphlet, we are the men for one another. I am, with the regard that one inquirer after truth never ceases to bear for another,

Yours, etc.—

Fulfilled prophecies, which I myself experience, are one thing; fulfilled prophecies, of which I know only from history that others say they have experienced them, are another.

Miracles, which I see with my own eyes, and which I have the opportunity to verify for myself, are one thing; miracles, of which I know only from history that others say they have seen them and verified them, are another.

That, surely, is beyond controversy? Surely there is no objection to be made against that?

If I had lived at the time of Christ, then of course the prophecies fulfilled in his person would have made me pay great attention to him. If I had actually seen him do miracles; if I had had no cause to doubt that these were true miracles; then in a worker of miracles who had been marked out so long before, I would have gained so much confidence that I would willingly have submitted my intellect to his, and I would have believed him in all things in which equally indisputable experiences did not tell against him.

Or: if I even now experienced that prophecies referring to Christ or the Christian religion, of whose priority in time I have long been certain, were fulfilled in a manner admitting no dispute; if even now miracles were done by believing Christians which I had to recognize as true miracles: what could prevent me from accepting this proof of the spirit and of power, as the apostle calls it?

In the last instance Origen was quite right in saying that in this proof of the spirit and of power the Christian religion was able to provide a proof of its own more divine than all Greek dialectic. For in his time there was still "the power to do miraculous things which still continued"

among those who lived after Christ's precept; and if he had undoubted examples of this, then if he was not to deny his own senses he had of necessity to recognize that proof of the spirit and of power.

But I am no longer in Origen's position: I live in the eighteenth century, in which miracles no longer happen. If I even now hesitate to believe anything on the proof of the spirit and of power, which I can believe on other arguments more appropriate to my age: what is the problem?

The problem is that this proof of the spirit and of power no longer has any spirit or power, but has sunk to the level of human testimonies of spirit and power.

The problem is that reports of fulfilled prophecies are not fulfilled prophecies; that reports of miracles are not miracles. These, the prophecies fulfilled before my eyes, the miracles that occur before my eyes, are immediate in their effect. But those—the reports of fulfilled prophecies and miracles, have to work through a medium which takes away all their force.

To quote Origen and to cite his words that "the proof of power is so called because of the astonishing miracles which have happened to confirm the teaching of Christ" is of little use if one keeps from one's readers what Origen says immediately thereafter. For the readers will also turn up Origen and find with surprise that he argues for the truth of the miracles which happened with the foundation of Christianity ἐκ πολλῶν μὲν ἄλλων [in various and sundry ways], thus, from the narrative of the evangelists; chiefly and particularly, however, he argues their truth on the basis of miracles which were still happening.

If then this proof of the proof has now entirely lapsed, if then all historical certainty is much too weak to replace this apparent proof of the proof which has lapsed: how is it to be expected of me that the same inconceivable truths which sixteen to eighteen hundred years ago people believed on the strongest inducement, should be believed by me to be equally valid on an infinitely lesser inducement?

Or is it invariably the case, that what I read in reputable historians is just as certain for me as what I myself experience?

I do not know that anyone has ever asserted this. What is asserted is only that the reports which we have of these prophecies and miracles are as reliable as historical truths ever can be. And then it is added that historical truths cannot be demonstrated: nevertheless we must believe them as firmly as truths that have been demonstrated.

To this I answer: *First,* who will deny (not I) that the reports of these miracles and prophecies are as reliable as historical truths ever can be? But if they are only as reliable as this, why are they treated as if they were infinitely more reliable?

And in what way? In this way, that something quite different and much greater is founded upon them than it is legitimate to found upon truths historically proved.

If no historical truth can be demonstrated, then nothing can be demonstrated by means of historical truths.

That is: *accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason.*

I do not for one moment deny that in Christ prophecies were fulfilled: I do not for one moment deny that Christ performed miracles. But since the truth of these miracles has completely ceased to be demonstrable by miracles still happening at the present time, since they are no more than reports of miracles (however incontroverted and incontrovertible they may be), I deny that they can and should bind me in the least to a faith in the other teachings of Christ. These other teachings I accept on other grounds.

Then *secondly:* What does it mean to accept an historical proposition as true? to believe an historical truth? Does it mean anything other than this: to accept this proposition, this truth as valid? to accept that there is no objecion to be brought against it? to accept that one historical proposition is built on one thing, another on another, that from one historical truth another follows? to reserve to oneself the right to estimate other historical things accordingly? Does it mean anything other than this? Anything more? Examine carefully.

We all believe that an Alexander lived who in a short time conquered almost all Asia. But who, on the basis of this belief, would risk anything of great, permanent worth, the loss of which would be irreparable? Who, in consequence of this belief, would forswear forever all knowledge that conflicted with this belief? Certainly not I. Now I have no objection to raise against Alexander and his victory: but it might still be possible that the story was founded on a mere poem of Choerilus just as the ten-year siege of Troy depends on no better authority than Homer's poetry.*

If on historical grounds I have no objection to the statement that Christ raised to life a dead man; must I therefore accept it as true that God has a Son who is of the same essence as himself? What is the connection between my inability to raise any significant objection to the evidence of the former and my obligation to believe something against which my reason rebels?

If on historical grounds I have no objection to the statement that this Christ himself rose from the dead, must I therefore accept it as true that this risen Christ was the Son of God?

That the Christ, against whose resurrection I can raise no important

* [Lessing wrote, of course, before the nineteenth-century excavations of Schliemann and Dörpfeld laid bare the site of ancient Troy.—Eds. G. and M.]

historical objection, therefore declared himself to be the Son of God; that his disciples therefore believed him to be such; this I gladly believe from my heart. For these truths, as truths of one and the same class, follow quite naturally on one another.

But to jump with that historical truth to a quite different class of truths, and to demand of me that I should form all my metaphysical and moral ideas accordingly; to expect me to alter all my fundamental ideas of the nature of the Godhead because I cannot set any credible testimony against the resurrection of Christ: if that is not a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος [change into an entirely different kind], then I do not know what Aristotle meant by this phrase.

It is said: "The Christ of whom on historical grounds you must allow that he raised the dead, that he himself rose from the dead, said himself that God had a Son of the same essence as himself and that he is this Son." This would be quite excellent! if only it were not the case that it is not more than historically certain that Christ said this.

If you press me still further and say: "Oh, yes! this is more than historically certain. For it is asserted by inspired historians who cannot make a mistake."

But, unfortunately, that also is only historically certain, that these historians were inspired and could not err.

That, then, is the ugly, broad ditch which I cannot get across, however often and however earnestly I have tried to make the leap. If anyone can help me over it, let him do it, I beg him, I adjure him. He will deserve a divine reward from me.

And so I repeat what I have said above in the same words. I do not for one moment deny that in Christ prophecies were fulfilled. I do not for one moment deny that Christ did miracles. But since the truth of these miracles has completely ceased to be demonstrable by miracles still happening now, since they are no more than reports of miracles (even though they be narratives which have not been, and cannot be, impugned), I deny that they can and should bind me to the very least faith in the other teachings of Christ.

What then does bind me? Nothing but these teachings themselves. Eighteen hundred years ago they were so new, so alien, so foreign to the entire mass of truths recognized in that age, that nothing less than miracles and fulfilled prophecies were required if the multitude were to attend to them at all.

But to make the multitude attentive to something means to put common sense on to the right track.

And so it came about, so it now is. And what it hunted out to the left and right of this track are the fruits of those miracles and fulfilled prophecies.

These fruits I may see before me ripe and ripened, and may I not be

satisfied with that? The old pious legend that the hand which scatters the seed must wash in snails' blood seven times for each throw, I do not doubt, but merely ignore it. What does it matter to me whether the legend is false or true? The fruits are excellent.

Suppose that a very useful mathematical truth had been reached by the discoverer through an obvious fallacy. (Even if such an instance does not exist, yet it could exist.) Should I deny this truth? Should I refuse to use this truth? Would I be on that account an ungrateful reviler of the discoverer, if I were unwilling to prove from his insight in other respects, indeed did not consider it capable of proof, that the fallacy through which he stumbled upon the truth *could* not be a fallacy?

I conclude, and my wish is: May all who are divided by the Gospel of John be reunited by the Testament of John. Admittedly it is apocryphal, this testament. But it is not on that account any the less divine.

Thus for Lessing faith and certitude are not far to seek, since the moral teachings of Christ have inherent universality. They prove themselves in human knowledge and experience in their own irresistible fashion. Here is one way in which faith finds its deeper inevitability and sureness. In Lessing's view, man's possession of these moral truths might in some sense be called the fruit of the apparent miracles and prophecy-fulfillment that drew attention to them in the first place. But faith is more timeless than temporal, more rooted in universal reason than in the accidents and flow of concrete fact as mankind comes to know it.

Although this was hardly Lessing's purpose, the emphasis on moral power here tends almost to minimize the importance of Jesus as the anchor for faith. The stress is upon the teachings more than the teacher. This is Lessing's way of bridging the faith-fact gap. The certainty for which he is seeking turns out to be the ethical teachings of Jesus in their claim to *universal* truth and their power to illumine life, demonstrable in every age.

2. Immanuel Kant

1724-1804

German philosopher. Anticipated central tendencies in such diverse schools of thought as Idealism, existentialism, and positivism. Born and lived at Königsberg, East Prussia, never going outside his native province. A semi-invalid during much of life. Professor of logic at Königsberg University. Considered man's knowledge to be colored and defined by his own inner experience. We know only appearances (phenomena), not things in themselves (noumena). Understood religion as the expression of a pure and willing intention to do good. Believed the presence of moral capacity in every man. As to certainty of faith, felt that "the historical can serve only for illustration, not for demonstration."

"Have the courage to make use of your own understanding." —Banner of the Enlightenment, formulated by Kant.

"A necessary consequence of . . . the moral disposition in us, the latter being the basis and the interpreter of all religion, is that in the end religion will gradually be freed from all empirical determining grounds and from all statutes which rest on history and which through the agency of ecclesiastical faith provisionally unite men for the requirements of the good; and thus at last the pure religion of reason will rule over all, 'so that God may be all in all.'"

Kant, although writing somewhat later than Lessing, clearly has in his background some of the same pressures. Among them are the breakdown of medieval unanimity and authority, and the sterility of much orthodox religion in his day. The rational tendencies and individualism of the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement, the rising tide of historical consciousness and biblical criticism—all deeply affected his thinking.

In the selection before us we feel, as in Lessing, a sense of the need to certify, to prove the nature of faith apart from sterile orthodoxies and anything the historical scholar and critic can discredit. This comes through with strongly individual force. Kant expresses it first in a series of lucid definitions: of religion in general, then of natural and revealed religion, then of modes of belief in the believer. Finally he deals with ways in which the believer has come by his belief. All this together with other observations in passing, that bear on the question of how,

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Kant's major writings are: Critique of Pure Reason *(1781),* Critique of Practical Reason *(1788),* Critique of Judgment *(1790) and* Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone *(1793). The reader will find the latter work especially helpful in clarifying Kant's understanding of faith and history.*

along what line, a religion has validity and how this is to be defined or discerned.

Having thus, so to speak, roughed out a geography of the basic possibilities of religon as he sees them, Kant then proceeds to discuss Christianity under two headings: as a *natural* religion and as a *revealed* or *learned* religion. The latter term arises because revealed religion depends on "the guardianship of *the learned.*" Revelation does not constantly repeat itself. It must be handed down from generation to generation, and the record depends on the integrity of the scholars who pass it on. Only if they are scrupulously genuine and wise, free from incidental influences and motives, can they hand it on in a pure state. With natural religion there is never any question as to its source (in man's own moral sense). With learned religion there must always be this problem. Kant embarks on his discussion of the two in the light of another question he has put to himself. What sort of religion, he asks, is best suited for all mankind? We leave the selection to give his answer.

Lessing, we have seen, felt keenly, painfully, the separation of faith from "fact" as apprehended through any secondhand process such as history or accepted ecclesiastical authority down the years. Yet for him faith and fact are united in Jesus' teachings. The importance of the teacher is for him somewhat subordinated to that of universal moral principles, which Jesus pronounced and helped to clarify in human consciousness.

Kant carries this tendency even further. He conceives of a kind of moral disposition within "pure practical reason" itself, which provides the real anchor for the certainties of faith. The moral law rooted in the very reason of man is the undeniable central element of man's life. Nor is this, for Kant, a prosaic comedown from the exalted heights of religious awareness. "Two things," he writes, "fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder, the more often and reflectively it deals with them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

That the individual has within himself the power to make true moral judgments seems to him so clear as hardly to need saying. We shall see in Part II that Kant is eloquent on the subject of man's shortcomings in not doing his duty, and the many ways in which he can be ensnared and led astray in thought and feeling. But he has no doubt whatever of our power as human beings to discern our duty if we try. In fact (he says), we are haunted by the awareness of it—the sense of our real duty. Much of Kant's discrimination in matters of psychology and motive concerns the devices by which we avoid it, or pretend not to know it.

Kant's discussion of Christianity, under the two headings, is therefore not at all concerned with the truth or rightness of the moral teachings of Jesus, which he enumerates in detail. Their truth he takes as self-evident,

although in some instances with interpretations that differ from the modern. Of all these teachings he remarks that one can "convince any man" of them, that they "carry their own proof." By contrast to our own time, it is amazing, looking back, to see that Kant did find it literally possible to believe that all rational men, from the depths of their hearts (or rather, *reason*), if only approached in the right way would easily agree as to the complete truth of Jesus' teachings.

The origin of Christianity he sees as "coming *from the mouth of the first Teacher* . . . as a moral religion, and as thus entering into the closest relation with reason." So, through reason, "it was able of itself, without historical learning, to be spread at all times and among all peoples with the greatest trustworthiness."

Kant discusses in the selection that follows (a) what must happen for a *natural* religion to become universal (showing that the necessary conditions have been perfectly set up by Christianity), and (b) what must be done if *factual*—i.e., historical or traditional—elements are added to a natural religion in the course of founding a Church. He shows the need for uncorrupted means of passing down the factual tradition, and notes also that Christianity has some traces of corruption. These he describes under the "pseudo-service" of the Church. The scholarship and apparatus needed for handing down *revealed* and/or factually (historically) derived doctrine (especially to those whose learning is inadequate to bring such doctrine within range of their own "pure reason") is subject to distortion.

Kant ends by remarking that no one can foresee what changes our faith must yet undergo. The successive impact of ecclesiastical scholarship on the one side and the layman's inner light on the other must go on, so long as we continue to seek religion outside ourselves rather than within. This shows how much Kant trusts the "inner moral law" and prefers it as a guide for human life. For him, external fact relates itself to the moral nature of man more by way of illustration than by being any basic part of it. He sees the relation of faith to Jesus of Nazareth in terms of his own total perspective.

Faith Kant defines as the acceptance of the fundamental principles of a religion. There is no necessary difference in scope between the words religion and faith: one is the principles themselves, while the other is the individual or collective acceptance of them. A people's faith, however, may also include the *factual tradition* by which a Church is founded. This is outside the realm of a "pure" religion derived from the "concepts of reason." Thus Christianity must be called the Christian *faith,* since it includes belief in a traditional and historical element. It is not *only,* in that sense, a pure religion. The truth is, Kant shows, that it is both a pure religion and a "faith," simultaneously.

It may be helpful to suggest some of the major ideas set forth in other parts of the work from which this selection is taken, in order to suggest the writer's overall direction of thought.[1] On the one hand, he speaks of the *archetype* of true humanity as the moral idea of a life where all duties are viewed as divine commands; on the other, of the *phenomenal* appearance of the God-man. The archetype is basic for faith itself. The factual occurrence only illustrates it. ". . . In the appearance of the God-Man [on earth], it is not that in him which strikes the senses and can be known through experience, but rather the archetype, lying in our reason . . . which is really the object of saving faith, and such a faith does not differ from the principle of a course of life well-pleasing to God."[2]

Although reason—the root of natural religion—is an individual matter, it presupposes a social context. This Kant describes as the "visible church . . . [therefore] *a community,* which must be founded." To act according to duty involves one's neighbor. The human species, being rational, is oriented toward social good. The highest good, however, requires an *ethical commonwealth* or association of well-disposed men, representing a universal republic based on laws of virtue. Such an order of human existence will require progress beyond the *ethical state of nature* in which we find ourselves.

Kant defines man's present state as a stage of personal-social development still marked by conflict between virtue and immorality, between good and evil. The life of mankind is moving toward a goal of social order permeated by a "recognition of all duties as divine commands," and corresponding obedience to a "common lawgiver." This is Kant's version of the kingdom of God so far as the earthly life of man is concerned. The idea is destined to fertilize later Christian thinking, especially the development of evangelical liberalism as it emerges and matures.

Our selection of Kant is from Part I of Book Four of his last major work, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* of which the first book had appeared in 1792. Book Two, however, had been refused publication by the Berlin government censor on the ground that it controverted the teachings of the Bible. Kant finally secured the *imprimatur* of the philosophical faculty of the University of Jena (a privilege accorded to certain university faculties), and was then able to bring out the entire work. Even so, it drew down upon him the wrath of King Frederick William II.[3] We may see from this how tender religious ques-

[1] For the remaining exposition see Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, trans. and ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), Book Three, *Division One,* pp. 87–138.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 110.

[3] *Ibid.,* Introduction, p. xxxiv.

tions were, in an age still barely emerging from medieval deference to authority.

(From Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, trans. and ed., Book Four, Part One, pp. 142–55. Reprinted by permission of The Open Court Publishing Company, La Salle, Illinois. Asterisks refer to footnotes by the writer. Numbered notes in brackets are those of editor or translator.)

CONCERNING THE SERVICE OF GOD IN RELIGION IN GENERAL

Religion is (subjectively regarded) the recognition of all duties as divine commands.* That religion in which I must know in advance that

* By means of this definition many an erroneous interpretation of the concept of a religion in general is obviated. *First,* in religion, as regards the theoretical apprehension and avowal of belief, no assertorial knowledge is required (even of God's existence), since, with our lack of insight into supersensible objects, such avowal might well be dissembled; rather is it merely a *problematical* assumption (hypothesis) regarding the highest cause of things that is presupposed speculatively, yet with an eye to the object toward which our morally legislative reason bids us strive—an *assertorial* faith, practical and therefore free, and giving promise of the realization of this its ultimate aim. This faith needs merely *the idea of God,* to which all morally earnest (and therefore confident) endeavor for the good must inevitably lead; it need not presume that it can certify the objective reality of this idea through theoretical apprehension. Indeed, the *minimum* of knowledge (it is possible that there may be a God) must suffice, subjectively, for whatever can be made the duty of every man. *Second,* this definition of a religion in general obviates the erroneous representation of religion as an aggregate of *special* duties having reference directly to God; thus it prevents our taking on (as men are otherwise very much inclined to do) *courtly obligations* over and above the ethico-civil duties of humanity (of man to man) and our seeking, perchance, even to make good the deficiency of the latter by means of the former. There are no special duties to God in a universal religion, for God can receive nothing from us; we cannot act for Him, nor yet upon Him. To wish to transform a guilty awe of Him into a duty of the sort described is to forget that awe is not a special act of religion but rather the religious temper in all our actions done in conformity with duty. And when it is said: "We ought to obey God rather than men,"[1] this means only that when statutory commands, regarding which men can be legislators and judges, come into conflict with duties which reason prescribes unconditionally, concerning whose observance or transgression God alone can be the judge, the former must yield precedence to the latter. But were we willing to regard the statutory commands, which are given out by a church as coming from God, as constituting that wherein God must be obeyed more than man, such a principle might easily become the war-cry, often heard, of hypocritical and ambitious clerics in revolt against their civil superiors. For that which is permissible, i.e., which the civil authorities command, is *certainly* duty; but

[1] [Cf. Acts V, 29]

something is a divine command in order to recognise it as my duty, is the *revealed* religion (or the one standing in need of a revelation); in contrast, that religion in which I must first know that something is my duty before I can accept it as a divine injunction is the *natural* religion. He who interprets the natural religion alone as morally necessary, i.e., as duty, can be called the *rationalist,* (in matters of belief); if he denies the reality of all supernatural divine revelation he is called a *naturalist;* if he recognizes revelation, but asserts that to know and accept it as real is not a necessary requisite to religion, he could be named a *pure rationalist;* but if he holds that belief in it is necessary to universal religion, he could be named the pure *supernaturalist* in matters of faith.

The rationalist, by virtue of his very title, must of his own accord restrict himself within the limits of human insight. Hence he will never, as a naturalist, dogmatize, and will never contest either the inner possibility of revelation in general or the necessity of a revelation as a divine means for the introduction of true religion; for these matters no man can determine through reason. Hence the question at issue can concern only the reciprocal claims of the pure rationalist and the supernaturalist in matters of faith, namely, what the one or the other holds as necessary and sufficient, or as merely incidental, to the unique true religion.

When religion is classified not with reference to its first origin and its inner possibility (here it is divided into natural and revealed religion) but with respect to its characteristics which make it *capable of being shared widely with others,* it can be of two kinds: either the *natural* religion, of which (once it has arisen) everyone can be convinced through his own reason, or a *learned* religion, of which one can convince others only through the agency of learning (in and through which they must be guided). This distinction is very important: for no inference regarding a religion's qualification or disqualification to be the universal religion of mankind can be drawn merely from its origin, whereas such an inference is possible from its capacity or incapacity for general dissemination, and it is this capacity which constitutes the essential character of that religion which ought to be binding upon every man.

Such a religion, accordingly, can be *natural,* and at the same time *revealed,* when it is so constituted that men *could and ought to have discovered it* of themselves merely through the use of their reason, although they *would* not have come upon it so early, or over so wide an area, as is required. Hence a revelation thereof at a given time and in

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whether something which is indeed permissible in itself, but cognizable by us only through divine revelation, is really commanded by God—that is (at least for the most part) highly uncertain.

a given place might well be wise and very advantageous to the human race, in that, when once the religion thus introduced is here, and has been made known publicly, everyone can henceforth by himself and with his own reason convince himself of its truth. In this event the religion is *objectively* a natural religion, though *subjectively* one that has been revealed; hence it is really entitled to the former name. For, indeed, the occurrence of such a supernatural revelation might subsequently be entirely forgotten without the slightest loss to that religion either of comprehensibility, or of certainty, or of power over human hearts. It is different with that religion which, on account of its inner nature, can be regarded only as revealed. Were it not preserved in a completely secure tradition or in holy books, as records, it would disappear from the world, and there must needs transpire a supernatural revelation, either publicly repeated from time to time or else enduring continuously within each individual, for without it the spread and propagation of such a faith would be impossible.

Yet in part at least every religion, even if revealed, must contain certain principles of the natural religion. For only through reason can thought add revelation to the concept of a *religion,* since this very concept, as though deduced from an obligation to the will of a *moral* legislator, is a pure concept of reason. Therefore we shall be able to look upon even a revealed religion on the one hand as a *natural,* on the other hand as a *learned* religion, and thus to test it and decide what and how much has come to it from one or the other source.

If we intend to talk about a revealed religion (at least one so regarded) we cannot do so without selecting some specimen or other from history, for we must devise instances as examples in order to be intelligible, and unless we take these from history their possibility might be disputed. We cannot do better than to adopt, as the medium for the elucidation of our idea of revealed religion in general, some book or other which contains such examples, especially one which is closely interwoven with doctrines that are ethical and consequently related to reason. We can then examine it, as one of a variety of books which deal with religion and virtue on the credit of a revelation, thus exemplifying the procedure, useful in itself, of searching out whatever in it may be for us a pure and therefore a universal religion of reason. Yet we do not wish thereby to encroach upon the business of those to whom is entrusted the exegesis of this book, regarded as the summary of positive doctrines of revelation, or to contest their interpretation based upon scholarship. Rather is it advantageous to scholarship, since scholars and philosophers aim at one and the same goal, to wit, the morally good, to bring scholarship, through its own rational principles, to the very point which it already expects to reach by another road. Here the New Testament, considered

as the source of the Christian doctrine, can be the book chosen. In accordance with our intention we shall now offer our demonstration in two sections, first, the Christian religion as a natural religion, and, second, as a learned religion, with reference to its content and to the principles which are found in it.

Section One: The Christian Religion as a Natural Religion

Natural religion, as morality (in its relation to the freedom of the agent) united with the concept of that which can make actual its final end (with the concept of *God* as moral Creator of the world), and referred to a continuance of man which is suited to this end in its completeness (to immortality), is a pure practical idea of reason which, despite its inexhaustible fruitfulness, presupposes so very little capacity for theoretical reason that one can convince every man of it sufficiently for practical purposes and can at least require of all men as a duty that which is its effect. This religion possesses the prime essential of the true church, namely, the qualification for universality, so far as one understands by that a validity for everyone (*universitas vel omnitudo distributiva*), *i.e.*, universal unanimity. To spread it, in this sense, as a world religion, and to maintain it, there is needed, no doubt, a body of servants (*ministerium*) of the invisible church, but not officials (*officiales*), in other words, teachers but not dignitaries, because in the rational religion of every individual there does not yet exist a church as a universal *union* (*omnitudo collectiva*), nor is this really contemplated in the above idea.

Yet such unanimity could not be maintained of itself and hence could not, unless it became a visible church, be propagated in its universality; rather is this possible only when a collective unanimity, in other words a union of believers in a (visible) church under the principles of a pure religion of reason, is added; though this church does not automatically arise out of that unanimity nor, indeed, were it already established, would it be brought by its free adherents (as was shown above) to a permanent status as a *community* of the faithful (because in such a religion none of those who has seen the light believes himself to require, for his religious sentiments, fellowship with others). Therefore it follows that unless there are added to the natural laws apprehensible through unassisted reason, certain statutory ordinances attended by legislative prestige (authority), that will still be lacking which constitutes a special duty of men, and a means to their highest end, namely, their enduring union into a universal visible church; and the authority mentioned above, in order to be a founder of such a church, presupposes a realm of fact[2] and not merely the pure concepts of reason.

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[2] [*ein Factum*]

Let us suppose there was a teacher of whom an historical record (or, at least, a widespread belief which is not basically disputable) reports that he was the first to expound publicly a pure and searching religion, comprehensible to the whole world (and thus natural). His teachings, as preserved to us, we can in this case test for ourselves. Suppose that all he did was done even in the face of a dominant ecclesiastical faith which was onerous and not conducive to moral ends (a faith whose perfunctory worship can serve as a type of all the other faiths, at bottom merely statutory, which were current in the world at the time). Suppose, further, we find that he had made this universal religion of reason the highest and indispensable condition of every religious faith whatsoever, and then had added to it certain statutes which provided forms and observances designed to serve as means of bringing into existence a church founded upon those principles. Now, in spite of the adventitiousness of his ordinances directed to this end, and the elements of arbitrariness[3] in them, and though we can deny the name of true universal church to these, we cannot deny to him himself the prestige due the one who called men to union in this church; and this without further adding to this faith burdensome new ordinances or wishing to transform acts which he had initiated into peculiar holy practices, required in themselves as being constituent elements of religion.

After this description one will not fail to recognise the person who can be reverenced, not indeed as the *founder* of the *religion* which, free from every dogma, is engraved in all men's hearts (for it does not have its origin in an arbitrary will),[4] but as the founder of the first true *church.* For attestation of his dignity as of divine mission we shall adduce several of his teachings as indubitable evidence of religion in general, let historical records be what they may (since in the idea itself is present adequate ground for its acceptance); these teachings, to be sure, can be no other than those of pure reason, for such alone carry their own proof, and hence upon them must chiefly depend the attestation of the others.

First, he claims that not the observance of outer civil or statutory churchly duties but the pure moral disposition of the heart alone can make man well-pleasing to God (Matthew V, 20–48); that sins in thought are regarded, in the eyes of God, as tantamount to action (V, 28) and that, in general, holiness is the goal toward which man should strive (V, 48); that, for example, to hate in one's heart is equivalent to killing (V, 22); that injury done one's neighbor can be repaired only through satisfaction rendered to the neighbor himself, not through acts of divine worship (V, 24), and that, on the point of truthfulness, the civil device

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[3] [*Willkürlichen*]

[4] [Our phrase "arbitrary will" translates "*willkürlichen Ursprunge*"]

for extorting it, by oath,* does violence to respect for truth itself (V, 34–37); that the natural but evil propensity of the human heart is to be completely reversed, that the sweet sense of revenge must be transformed into tolerance (V, 39,40) and the hatred of one's enemies into charity (V, 44). Thus, he says, does he intend to do full justice to the Jewish law (V, 17); whence it is obvious that not scriptural scholarship but the pure religion of reason must be the law's interpreter, for taken according to the letter, it allowed the very opposite of all this. Furthermore, he does not leave unnoticed, in his designations of the strait gate and the narrow way, the misconstruction of the law which men allow themselves in order to evade their true moral duty and, holding themselves immune through having fulfilled their churchly duty (VII, 13).† He further requires of these pure dispositions that they manifest themselves also in *works* (VII, 16) and, on the other hand, denies the insidious hope of those who imagine that, through invocation and praise of the Supreme Lawgiver in the person of His envoy, they will make up for their lack of good works and ingratiate themselves into favor (VII, 21). Regarding these works he declares that they ought to be performed publicly, as an example for imitation (V, 16), and in a cheerful mood, not as actions extorted from slaves (VI, 16); and that thus from a small beginning in the sharing and spreading of such dispositions, religion, like a grain of seed in good soil, or a ferment of goodness, would gradually, through its inner power, grow into a kingdom of God (XIII, 31–33). Finally, he combines all duties (1) in one *universal* rule (which includes

* It is hard to understand why this clear prohibition against this method of forcing confession before a civil tribunal of religious teachers—a method based upon mere superstition, not upon conscientiousness—is held as so unimportant. For that it is superstition whose efficacy is here most relied on is evident from the fact that the man whom one does not trust to tell the truth in a solemn statement, on the truthfulness of which depends a decision concerning the rights of a human being (the holiest of beings in this world) is yet expected to be persuaded to speak truly, by the use of a formula through which, over and above that statement, he simply calls down upon himself divine punishments (which in any event, with such a lie, he cannot escape), just as though it rested with him whether or not to render account to this supreme tribunal. In the passage of Scripture cited above, the mode of confirmation by oath is represented as an *absurd* presumption, the attempt to make actual, as though with magical words, what is really not in our power. But it is clearly evident that the wise Teacher who here says that whatever goes beyond Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay, in the asseveration of truth comes of evil, had in view the bad effect which oaths bring in their train—namely, that the greater importance attached to them almost sanctions the common lie.

† The *strait gate* and the narrow way, which leads to life, is that of good life-conduct; the *wide gate* and the broad way, found by many, is the *church*. Not that the church and its doctrines are responsible for men being lost, but that the *entrance* into it and the knowledge of its statutes or celebration of its rites are regarded as the manner in which God really wishes to be served.

within itself both the inner and the outer moral relations of men), namely: Perform your duty for no motive[5] other than unconditioned esteem for duty itself, i.e., love God (the Legislator of all duties) above all else; and (2) in a *particular* rule, that, namely, which concerns man's external relation to other men as universal duty: Love every one as yourself, *i.e.*, further his welfare from good-will that is immediate and and not derived from motives of self-advantage. These commands are not mere laws of virtue but precepts of *holiness* which we ought to pursue, and the very pursuit of them is called *virtue*.

Accordingly he destroys the hope of all who intend to wait upon this moral goodness quite passively, with their hands in their laps, as though it were a heavenly gift which descends from on high. He who leaves unused the natural predisposition to goodness which lies in human nature (like a talent entrusted to him) in lazy confidence that a higher moral influence will no doubt supply the moral character and completeness which he lacks, is confronted with the threat that even the good which, by virtue of his natural predisposition, he may have done, will not be allowed to stand him in stead because of this neglect (XXV, 29).

As regards men's very natural expectation of an allotment of happiness proportional to a man's moral conduct, especially in view of the many sacrifices of the former which must be undergone for the sake of the latter, he promises (V, 11,12) a reward for these sacrifices in a future world, but one in accordance with the differences of disposition in this conduct between those who did their duty *for the sake of the reward* (or for release from deserved punishment) and the better men who performed it merely for its own sake; the latter will be dealt with in a different manner. When the man governed by self-interest, the god of this world, does not renounce it but merely refines it by the use of reason and extends it beyond the constricting boundary of the present, he is represented (Luke XVI, 3–9) as one who, in his very person [as servant], defrauds his master [self-interest] and wins from him sacrifices in behalf of "duty." For when he comes to realize that sometime, perhaps soon, the world must be forsaken, and that he can take along into the other world nothing of what he here possessed, he may well resolve to strike off from the account what he or his master, self-interest, has a legal right to exact from the indigent, and, as it were, thereby to acquire for himself bills of exchange, payable in another world. Herein he acts, no doubt, *cleverly* rather than *morally*, as regards the motives of such charitable actions, and yet in conformity with the moral law, at least according to the letter of that law; and he can hope that for this too he

[5] [*Triebfeder*]

may not stand unrequited in the future.* Compare with this what is said of charity toward the needy from sheer motives of duty (Matthew XXV, 35–40), where those, who gave succor to the needy without the idea even entering their minds that such action was worthy of a reward or that they thereby obligated heaven, as it were, to recompense them, are, for this very reason, because they acted thus without attention to reward, declared by the Judge of the world to be those really chosen for His kingdom, and it becomes evident that when the Teacher of the Gospel spoke of rewards in the world to come he wished to make them thereby not an incentive to action but merely (as a soul-elevating representation of the consummation of the divine benevolence and wisdom in the guidance of the human race) an object of the purest respect and of the greatest moral approval when reason reviews human destiny in its entirety.

Here then is a complete religion, which can be presented to all men comprehensibly and convincingly through their own reason; while the possibility and even the necessity of its being an archetype for us to imitate (so far as men are capable of that imitation) have, be it noted, been made evident by means of an example without either the truth of those teachings nor the authority and the worth of the Teacher requiring any external certification (for which scholarship or miracles, which are not matters for everyone, would be required). When appeals are here made to older (Mosaic) legislation and prefiguration, as though these were to serve the Teacher as means of confirmation, they are presented not in support of the truth of his teachings but merely for the introduction of these among people who clung wholly, and blindly, to the old. This introduction, among men whose heads, filled with statutory dogmas, have been almost entirely unfitted for the religion of reason, must always be more difficult than when this religion is to be brought to the reason of people uninstructed but also unspoiled. For this reason no one should be astonished to find an exposition, that adapted itself to the prejudices of those times, now puzzling and in need of pains-taking exegesis; though indeed it everywhere permits a religious doctrine to shine forth and, in

* We know nothing of the future, and we ought not to seek to know more than what is rationally bound up with the incentives of morality and their end. Here belongs the belief that there are no good actions which will not, in the next world, have their good consequences for him who performs them; that, therefore, however reprehensible a man may find himself at the end of his life, he must not on that account refrain from doing at least *one* more good deed which is in his power, and that, in so doing, he has reason to hope that, in proportion as he possesses in this action a purely good intent, the act will be of greater worth than those actionless absolutions which are supposed to compensate for the deficiency of good deeds without providing anything for the lessening of the guilt.

addition, frequently points explicitly to that which must be comprehensible and, without any expenditure of learning, convincing to all men.

Section Two: The Christian Religion as a Learned Religion

To the extent to which a religion propounds, as necessary, dogmas which cannot be known to be so through reason, but which are none the less to be imparted uncorrupted (as regards essential content) to all men in all future ages, it must be viewed (if we do not wish to assume a continuous miracle of revelation) as a sacred charge entrusted to the guardianship of *the learned.* For even though *at first,* accompanied by miracles and deeds, this religion, even in that which finds no confirmation in reason, could obtain entry everywhere, yet the very report of these miracles, together with the doctrines which stand in need of confirmation through this report, requires *with the passage of time* the written, authoritative, and unchanging instruction of posterity.

The acceptance of the fundamental principles of a religion is faith *par excellence* (*fides sacra*). We shall therefore have to examine the Christian faith on the one hand as a pure *rational faith,* on the other, as a *revealed faith* (*fides statutaria*). The first may be regarded as a faith freely assented to by everyone (*fides elicita*), the second, as a faith which is commanded (*fides imperata*). Everyone can convince himself, through his own reason, of the evil which lies in human hearts and from which no one is free; of the impossibility of ever holding himself to be justified before God through his own life-conduct, and, at the same time, of the necessity for such a justification valid in His eyes; of the futility of substituting churchly observances and pious compulsory services for the righteousness which is lacking, and, over and against this, of the inescapable obligation to become a new man: and to become convinced of all this is part of religion.

But from the point where the Christian teaching is built not upon bare concepts of reason but upon facts, it is no longer called merely the Christian *religion,* but the Christian *faith,* which has been made the basis of a church. The service of a church consecrated to such a faith is therefore twofold: what, on the one hand, must be rendered the church according to the historical faith, and, on the other, what is due it in accordance with the practical and moral faith of reason. In the Christian church neither of these can be separated from the other as adequate in itself; the second is indispensable to the first because the Christian faith is a religious faith, and the first is indispensable to the second because it is a learned faith.

The Christian faith, as a *learned* faith, relies upon history and, so far as erudition (objectively) constitutes its foundation, it is not in itself a

free faith (*fides elicita*) or one which is deduced from insight into adequate theoretical proofs. Were it a pure rational faith it would have to be thought of as a free faith even though the moral laws upon which it, as a belief in a divine Legislator, is based, command unconditionally—and it was thus presented in Section One. Indeed, if only this believing were not made a duty, it could be a free theoretical faith even when taken as an historical faith, provided all men were learned. But if it is to be valid for all men, including the unlearned, it is not only a faith which is commanded but also one which obeys the command blindly (*fides servilis*), *i.e.*, without investigation as to whether it really is a divine command.

In the revealed doctrines of Christianity, however, one cannot by any means start with *unconditional belief* in revealed propositions (in themselves hidden from reason) and then let the knowledge of erudition follow after, merely as a defense, as it were, against an enemy attacking it from the rear; for if this were done the Christian faith would be not merely a *fides imperata*, but actually *servilis*. It must therefore always be taught as at least a *fides historice elicita;* that is, *learning* should certainly constitute in it, regarded as a revealed credal doctrine, not the rearguard but the vanguard, and then the small body of textual scholars (the clerics), who, incidentally, could not at all dispense with secular learning, would drag along behind itself the long train of the unlearned (the laity) who, of themselves, are ignorant of the Scripture (and to whose number belong even the rulers of world-states). But if this, in turn, is to be prevented from happening, recognition and respect must be accorded, in Christian dogmatic, to universal human reason as the supremely commanding principle in a natural religion, and the revealed doctrine, upon which a church is founded and which stands in need of the learned as interpreters and conservers, must be cherished and cultivated as merely a means, but a most precious means, of making this doctrine comprehensible, even to the ignorant, as well as widely diffused and permanent.

This is the *true service* of the church under the dominion of the good principle; whereas that in which revealed faith is to precede religion is *pseudo-service*. In it the moral order is wholly reversed and what it merely means is commanded unconditionally (as an end). Belief in propositions of which the unlearned can assure themselves neither through reason nor through Scripture (inasmuch as the latter would first have to be authenticated) would here be made an absolute duty (*fides imperata*) and, along with other related observances, it would be elevated, as a compulsory service, to the rank of a saving faith even though this faith lacked moral determining grounds of action. A church founded upon this latter principle does not really have *servants* (*ministri*), like those of the other organization, but commanding high *officials* (*officiales*). Even when (as in a Protestant church) these officials do not

appear in hierarchical splendor as spiritual officers clothed with external power—even when, indeed, they protest verbally against all this—they yet actually wish to feel themselves regarded as the only chosen interpreters of a Holy Scripture, having robbed pure rational religion of its merited office (that of being at all times Scripture's highest interpreter) and having commanded that Scriptural learning be used solely in the interest of the churchly faith. They transform, in this way, the *service* of the church (*ministerium*) into a *domination* of its members (*imperium*)although, in order to conceal this usurpation, they make use of the modest title of the former. But this domination, which would have been easy for reason, costs the church dearly, namely, in the expenditure of great learning. For, "blind with respect to nature, it brings down upon its head the whole of antiquity and buries itself beneath it."[6]

The course of affairs, once brought to this pass, is as follows. First, that procedure, wisely adopted by the first propagators of the teaching of Christ in order to achieve its introduction among the people, is taken as a part of religion itself, valid for all times and peoples, with the result that one is obliged to believe *that every Christian must be a Jew whose Messiah has come.* Yet this does not harmonize with the fact that a Christian is really bound by no law of Judaism (as statutory), though the entire Holy Book of this people is none the less supposed to be accepted faithfully as a divine revelation given to all men.* Yet the

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[6] [The source of this quotation has not been found]

* Mendelssohn[7] very ingeniously makes use of this weak spot in the customary presentation of Christianity wholly to reject every demand upon a son of Israel that he change his religion. For, he says, since the Jewish faith itself is, according to the avowal of Christians, the substructure upon which the superstructure of Christianity rests, the demand that it be abandoned is equivalent to expecting someone to demolish the ground floor of a house in order to take up his abode in the second story. His real intention is fairly clear. He means to say: First wholly remove Judaism itself out of your *religion* (it can always remain, as an antiquity, in the historical account of the faith); we can then take your proposal under advisement. (Actually nothing would then be left but pure moral religion unencumbered by statutes.) Our burden will not be lightened in the least by throwing off the yoke of outer observances if, in its place, another yoke, namely confession of faith in sacred history—a yoke which rests far more heavily upon the conscientious—is substituted in its place.

In any case, the sacred books of this people will doubtless always be preserved and will continue to possess value for scholarship even if not for the benefit of religion: since the history of no other people dates back, with some color of credibility, so far as does this, into epochs of antiquity (even to the beginning of the world) in which all secular history known to us can be arranged; and thus the great hiatus, which must be left by the latter, is filled by the former.

[7] [Moses Mendelssohn, 1729–1786 (father of Felix Mendelssohn, the composer) was a prominent Jewish philosopher and theologian. Kant and Mendelssohn were familiar, over a long period of years, with each other's writings, and in 1763 both submitted essays for a prize offered by the Royal Academy in Berlin; Mendelssohn

authenticity of this Book involves great difficulty (an authenticity which is certainly not proved merely by the fact that passages in it, and indeed the entire sacred history appearing in the books of the Christians, are used for the sake of this proof). Prior to the beginning of Christianity, and even prior to its considerable progress, Judaism had not gained a foothold among the *learned public,* that is, was not yet known to its learned contemporaries among other peoples; its historical recording was therefore not yet subjected to control and so its sacred Book had not, on account of its antiquity, been brought into historical credibility. Meanwhile, apart from this, it is not enough to know it in translations and to pass it on to posterity in this form; rather, the certainty of churchly faith based thereon requires that in all future times and among all peoples there be scholars who are familiar with the Hebrew language (so far as knowledge is possible of a language in which we have only a single book). And it must be regarded as not merely a concern of historical scholarship in general but one upon which hangs the salvation of mankind, that there should be men sufficiently familiar with Hebrew to assure the true religion for the world.

The Christian religion has had a similar fate, in that, even though its sacred events occurred openly under the very eyes of a learned people, its historical recording was delayed for more than a generation before this religion gained a foothold among this people's learned public; hence the authentication of the record must dispense with the corroboration of contemporaries. Yet Christianity possesses the great advantage over Judaism of being represented as coming *from the mouth of the first Teacher* not as a statutory but as a moral religion, and as thus entering into the closest relation with reason so that, through reason, it was able of itself, without historical learning, to be spread at all times and among all peoples with the greatest trustworthiness. But the first founders of the Christian communities[8] did find it necessary to entwine the history of Judaism with it; this was managed wisely in view of the situation at the time, and perhaps with reference to that situation alone; thus this history too has come down to us in the sacred legacy of Christianity. But the founders of the church incorporated these episcopal means of recommendation among the essential articles of faith and multiplied them either with tradition, or with interpretations, which acquired legal force from the Councils or were authenticated by means of scholarship. As for this scholarship, or its extreme opposite, the inner light to which every

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won the prize, Kant having been given second place, and their two essays were published together in 1764. Kant here refers to Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem, oder über religiöse Macht und Judenthum* ("Jerusalem, or concerning Religious Power and Judaism"). Cf. Kant's *Streit der Facultäten,* Berlin Edition, 1907, p. 52 n.]

[8] [*Gemeinde,* congregations]

layman can pretend, it is impossible to know how many changes the faith will still have to undergo through these agencies; but this cannot be avoided so long as we seek religion without and not within us.

It may be seen from the foregoing that, like other Enlightenment thinkers, Kant hesitates to tie faith too closely to fact. Not that the pure religion of reason can be divorced from ecclesiastical faith. We have here, though, a contrast between belief subordinated to duty in one case and duty subordinated to belief in divine matters in the other. Owing to human weakness, man has to contend at present with the problems of an interrelation between the moral and the ecclesiastical. This means a people unevenly united as between ethical obligation and a visible historical background—between reason and "fact."

Actually (Kant believed), within ecclesiastical faith there is always the kernel of pure religion of reason, the universal religion. This involves almost automatically—as if obvious—a belief in God the Creator and in man's immortality. The visible institution is always to be measured by the marks of the true Church. These are: universality, pure motivation in morality, freedom from compulsion either internal or external, and relationships patterned on the family rather than a political entity. In such a social order men's unity with each other is voluntary and proceeds from a common obedience to the universal lawgiver. The transition from ecclesiastical faith to the all-inclusive, free claims of a pure religion of reason marks the coming of the kingdom of God. The *Church militant* as it becomes the *Church triumphant* is released from its institutional burdens.[4]

One must be careful not to overemphasize the independence of Kant's archetype from history. He is never able really to separate the principle from the illustration, any more than he can finally separate moral reason from the historical facts in which it is clothed. Since Christianity is both a *natural* and a *learned* religion, the Christian Church must give proper attention to both functions. It embraces both the practical, moral religion based on pure concepts of reason, and the historical aspect of faith, bound up in the realm of fact and the handing down of revelation.

Kant succeeds better in showing that both elements of this opposition are necessary than in clarifying how each is indispensable to the other. He opens himself to the implication that the ideal of "humanity in whom God is well pleased" requires no historical embodiment at all, since its true basis is the moral disposition in every man.

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[4] The view of a Church freed of institutional embarrassments has been quite popular in the contemporary period. In his work, *The Misunderstanding of the Church,* Emil Brunner articulates such a viewpoint. For Brunner, Kant's "pure religion of reason" is replaced by concrete, active *koinonia* or pure *ecclesia.* See Karl Barth's critique in *Church Dogmatics,* Vol. IV, Part 2, sec. 67.

3. Friedrich Schleiermacher

1781-1834

German theologian. Born in Breslau, son of a Reformed army chaplain. Parents converted to the Herrnhuten Brethren, near Dresden, a Pietest group. Student and professor at University of Halle until defeat of Prussia by Napoleon. Went to Berlin, where in 1810 he helped found Berlin University. Preacher, professor and dean, theological writer, he has greatly influenced Protestant thought down to the present day. In 1799 published On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, *a plea to intelligent people to understand religion as something other than empty ritual and dogma. Tried to reconcile systematic theology with a scientific view of the world. In some things a follower of Kant, he believed in direct religious experience and awareness of complete dependence on God.*

"I maintain that in all better souls piety springs necessarily by itself; that a province of its own in the mind belongs to it, in which it has unlimited sway; that it is worthy to animate most profoundly the noblest and best and to be fully accepted and known by them."

While Kant saw religion largely in terms of the moral imperative, defining it as the recognition of all duties as divine commands, for Schleiermacher thought and action are both subordinate to piety. By this we understand a heightened consciousness of God, the feeling of absolute dependence upon God. The thoughtful and conscientious person knows his finite limitations and his dependence. The religious "moment" undergirds his moral as well as intellectual life.[1] This stirring of the depths

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Chief writings: In addition to the work mentioned above, Schleiermacher brought out in 1819–22 The Christian Faith, *written as a theology for the combined Lutheran and Reformed Churches, whose union he favored.*

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[1] The term "moment" or "religious moment" is repeatedly used in theological writing and translations, even of modern times, apparently in the sense of awareness which goes deep enough to be truly "of God." The word itself adds a connotation of the fragility or fleetingness of these realizations when first experienced. Elsewhere Schleiermacher also speaks of systematizing the "principal moments of the religious consciousness," as if these were shades or types of awareness. He makes very clear that the Christian should seek "absolute facility and constancy of religious emotion." Thus "moment" implies not so much an isolated instant of time as a depth of experience, which in fact Schleiermacher would like to make continuous. All this does not prevent the term from being used also here and there in its usual sense of a mere instant of time, or in both meanings together, as in Kierkegaard, of pp. 87ff.

within involves both mind and will. God-consciousness never exists in isolation from knowing and doing, but is an "indispensable third."[2]

The sense of total dependence on God permeating every instant of our finite freedom is Schleiermacher's idea of being in relation with God. This takes a particular form in monotheism. What saves Christianity from idolatry or polytheism is the relation between God-consciousness and self-consciousness. We shall see presently that these kinds of consciousness are closely interrelated in their mature expression.[3] Idolatry wrongly ties the thought of God's being and presence to a concrete image, while polytheism multiplies this to a number of such images. Monotheism, on the other hand, stresses the "transparency" (to use Tillich's fine word) of the finite to the infinite. This last is not expressed in visible figures and places, but by infinity coming through. Here God-consciousness is at once universal and particular. Monotheism is man's awareness of One who is so radically beyond the many limited imaginings of deity as to be available anywhere to the seeking individual consciousness.

Another distinguishing feature of Christianity according to Schleiermacher is its ethical drive, which we shall examine in more detail in Part II. It is a type of religion where the natural and the aesthetic are subordinated to the moral rather than the reverse. The feeling of dependence on God is akin to the prophetic idea of the kingdom of God. This is in contrast to the classical notion of "beauty of soul" in passive response to the influence of nature and the world. In the monotheism of Christianity man is given the freedom and the right to control and shape nature as well as his social destiny. It is all part of his contribution to God's purposes for his creation. Man is not required to regard with awe the environment in which he finds himself.

But what most clearly marks off Christianity from other religions is the awareness of the redemption accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth. Here is where the finite is most truly "transparent" or open to its infinite ground. For in Jesus of Nazareth—and this is his uniqueness and

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[2] *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), p. 37 f. Schleiermacher's "indispensable third," which interpenetrates both mind and will, anticipates Heidegger's emphasis upon "primal thinking"—i.e., standing before the unveiledness of being in a way that cuts under the separation between subject and object. This has been picked up by Ernst Fuchs, Gerhard Ebeling, Heinrich Ott, and others now writing as part of a movement called the "New Hermeneutic." See below, chap. 15, pp. 463ff. for a further exposition of this current tendency.

[3] In addition to the selection included here, our exposition draws upon Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*, H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, eds. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), pp. 31–52. See below, chap. 13, for a further summary of key concepts and additional excerpts.

finality—there is a complete integration between living self-awareness and absolute God-consciousness.[4] Here, then, is where one can speak most appropriately of the relation of faith to historical fact. History is not for Schleiermacher primarily a mere illustration of what is already given in the moral reason of every man.[5]

In the following selection Schleiermacher, noting that Christianity is one of the three great monotheistic faiths along with Judaism and Islam,

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[4] Schleiermacher's view of the "finality" of Christ is in many ways like that of Kierkegaard, who defines faith as an objective uncertainty held with passionate inwardness. Where "subjectivity" becomes most intense, at the point of the absolute paradox of God in time, faith perceives the infinite as at once touching and yet transcending secular reality at all points. Compare also Tillich's view that Jesus' claim to "finality" is in his utter renunciation of his own personal being on the cross. This expressed both his ultimate concern and his faith in God's promises. In his willingness to turn away so radically from himself, Jesus is thus uniquely "transparent" to the ultimate "ground" of all reality.

[5] It is instructive to note at this point how Rudolf Otto joins and contributes to the discussion (see his *The Idea of the Holy* [London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1952]). Otto draws upon both Kant and Schleiermacher, and yet seeks to move beyond them. His focus is upon the "holy" or feeling of the "numinous" as an a priori, and thus a qualification of empirical experience. This elemental touch on life gives rise to such experiences as awe and dread, attraction and repulsion, as man is confronted by what he apprehends as "wholly other," and shapes his life and culture in openness to it.

Otto seeks to refine Kant's perspective by insisting that the archetype—in this case the "numinous"—is indeed a priori, but not innate. It is a point which Kant would not care to refute totally. The impingement on life and culture implies both a potentiality within and stimulation from outside. Nor does the latter simply "illustrate" the former. Each is as essential as the other. Thus Otto opposes any type of splintering between person and event, idea and fact, or faith and history. Religion as a universal phenomenon presupposes a general potentiality for apprehending the "holy." But this always takes place in relation to concrete particulars. In Christianity the interplay between inner potential and the stimulus of it is focused in the fact of Jesus of Nazareth and the biblical history that fans out from him.

This enables Otto to retain a view both of religion in general and of quite particular expressions in given forms. It preserves a kind of universality and thus invulnerability for faith, but goes a long way toward a fuller recognition of the importance of fact in faith. Otto claims to correct Schleiermacher on two counts. (1) Instead of the phrase "feeling of dependence" he prefers "creature consciousness" for pinpointing the impingement of the "holy" upon human experience. Schleiermacher's term (no doubt unintentionally) suggests one psychological state among others, whereas the primal eruption of the "numinous" involves a total pervasive orientation of life. (2) This "creature feeling" is a response to the "wholly other." Schleiermacher, as Otto reads him, is at times less than perfectly clear about this.

Thus Otto stands somewhere between the immanental point of view of earlier times and the radical transcendence which later a Barth will so forcefully express. At the same time, Otto's empirical temper puts him somewhat in line with other currents which are flowing powerfully at the present time. The question remains whether Otto fully perceived the radical historicity—particular rather than universal—of every instance of faith or apprehension of the "holy."

arrives at the discovery of its one major distinctive element: "that everything in it is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth." In a second part he brings this to the level of the individual, showing that no one can participate genuinely in the Christian communion except "through faith in Jesus as the Redeemer." And in a long Postscript to the second discussion he investigates the importance to faith (actually the unimportance) of miracles, prophecies, and "inspiration."

The redemption focused in Jesus of Nazareth involves stimulation and restoration of God-consciousness in man. Yet Schleiermacher is constrained to say that this is mediated directly through inner experience "as the demonstration of the Spirit and of power."[6] It does not come through external "fact" as in miracles and prophecies. The certainty involved in the Christian faith is different from the sort of certainty arrived at in our relations with the world and other persons, which depends on outward perception. It is also different from the more general consciousness of absolute dependence mentioned above, "as conditioned by a Being placed outside of us, and as expressing our relation to that Being."

The certainty of faith involved with Jesus of Nazareth and redemption through him is a "purely factual certainty" by Schleiermacher's definition. That is, it is the "certainty of a fact which is entirely inward." Here we seem to be moving toward the more modern concept of "internalized" as opposed to merely external history. Faith and awareness of redemption are inextricably tied in with the fact of Jesus. But the distinctive Christian consciousness involves an inner commitment of faith—a kind of inner knowledge that springs up in the context of the believing and witnessing community.

Schleiermacher notes that one does not seek to know Jesus *behind* the testimony of the believing community or beyond it, so to speak. This anticipates a theme later developed by Martin Kähler, who argues that "faith springs from faith" rather than "bare fact." The consciousness of redemption accomplished in Jesus is an inner experience, sparked by those who already share this awareness. They come to it through Christian preaching, including the scriptural account of Christ and his work.

Thus we see that Schleiermacher has the Romantic interest in direct feeling and experience. These are the true avenues for any form of knowledge, and for speech that moves to the surface from the depths of life. Herder before him had already pointed beyond Kant in his stress on living experience, especially the idea that history is no mere illustration of a rational background of thought.[7] For Herder, history is rather an organic process, a shifting tradition in which we participate by a kind

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[6] Note the similarity to language first encountered in Lessing. We shall find this happening again in the unfolding story.

[7] See Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl,* Brian Cozens, trans. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), chap. V.

of empathy and identification. We have seen that Schleiermacher disbelieved in the purely illustrative function of history. A distinction must be made, of course, between the historical person and the universal reality: God, known as divine presence, power, and purpose. But redemption is made available to man in community precisely *through* the person and work of Christ. In him the unity between finite and infinite reaches its ultimate expression.

Schleiermacher favored the merging of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, and wrote *The Christian Faith* as an expression of doctrine for this union. He agreed with Kant that theology was not an exact science but must be revised from time to time in the light of the developing experience of mankind. Our two selections are excerpts from the Introduction to *The Christian Faith,* a section entitled: "Presentation of Christianity in its Peculiar Essence: Propositions Borrowed from Apologetics." The headings on the selections are as in the original.

(From Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Christianity is a Monotheistic Faith . . ." and ". . . Jesus as the Redeemer," *The Christian Faith,* H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, eds. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956], pp. 52–60 and 68–76, respectively. Footnotes are the writer's except for no. 2, in brackets, which is the translator's.)

CHRISTIANITY IS A MONOTHEISTIC FAITH, BELONGING TO THE TELEOLOGICAL TYPE OF RELIGION, AND IS ESSENTIALLY DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER SUCH FAITHS BY THE FACT THAT IN IT EVERYTHING IS RELATED TO THE REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED BY JESUS OF NAZARETH.

1. The only pertinent way of discovering the peculiar essence of any particular faith and reducing it as far as possible to a formula is by showing the element which remains constant throughout the most diverse religious affections within this same communion, while it is absent from analogous affections within other communions. Now since we have little reason to expect that this peculiarity is equally strongly marked in all the different varieties of emotions, there is all the greater possibility of our missing the mark in this attempt, and so coming in the end to the opinion that there is no hard-and-fast inward difference at all, but only the outward difference as determined by time and place. However, we may with some certainty conclude from what has been said above,[1] that we shall be likely to miss the peculiarity if we keep principally to what is most closely connected with the basal fact, and this is the procedure which underlies the formula of our proposition. But Christianity pre-

[1] 10, *Postscript.*

sents special difficulties, even in this fact alone, that it takes a greater variety of forms than other faiths and is split up into a multiplicity of smaller communions or churches; and thus there arises a twofold task, first, to find the peculiar essence, common to all these communions, of Christianity as such, and secondly, to find the peculiar essence of the particular communion whose right is to be authenticated or whose system of doctrine is to be established. But still further difficulty lies in the fact that even in each particular ecclesiastical communion almost every doctrine appears with the most multifarious variations at different times and places; and this implies as its basis, not indeed, perhaps, an equally great diversity in the religious affections themselves, but always at least a great diversity in the manner of understanding and appraising them. Indeed, the worst of all is that, owing to this variation, the bounds of the Christian realm become a matter of dispute even among Christians themselves, one asserting of this form of teaching, and another of that form, that though it was indeed engendered within Christianity it is nevertheless really un-Christian in content. Now, if he who wishes to solve our problem belongs himself to one of these parties, and assumes at the outset that only what is found within the realm of that one view ought to be taken into account in ascertaining what is distinctive of Christianity, he is at the outset taking controversies as settled, for the settlement of which he professes to be only discovering the conditions. For only when the peculiar essence of Christianity has been ascertained can it be decided how far this or that is compatible or incompatible with it. But if the investigator succeeds in freeing himself from all partiality, and therefore takes into account everything, however opposed, so long as it professes to be Christian, then on the other hand he is in danger of reaching a result far scantier and more colourless in its content, and consequently less suitable to the aims of our present task. That is the present state of affairs, and it cannot be concealed. Now since each man, the more religious he is, usually brings his individual religion the more into this investigation, there is a large majority of the people who form their idea of the peculiar essence of Christianity according to the interests of their party. But for the interests of Apologetics as well as of Dogmatics it seems advisable rather to be content with a scanty result at the beginning and to hope for its completion in the course of further procedure, than to begin with a narrow and exclusive formula, which is of necessity confronted by one or more opposing formulae, with which there must be a conflict sooner or later. And it is in this sense that the formula of our proposition is set up.

2. It is indisputable that all Christians trace back to Christ the communion to which they belong. But here we are also presupposing that the term *Redemption* is one to which they all confess: not only that they

all *use* the word, with perhaps different meanings, but that there is some common element of meaning which they all have in mind, even if they differ when they come to a more exact description of it. The term itself is in this realm merely figurative, and signifies in general a passage from an evil condition, which is represented as a state of captivity or constraint,[2] into a better condition—this is the passive side of it. But it also signifies the help given in that process by some other person, and this is the active side of it. Further, the usage of the word does not essentially imply that the worse condition must have been preceded by a better condition, so that the better one which followed would really be only a restoration: that point may at the outset be left quite open. But now apply the word to the realm of religion, and suppose we are dealing with the teleological type of religion. Then the evil condition can only consist in an obstruction or arrest of the vitality of the higher self-consciousness, so that there comes to be little or no union of it with the various determinations of the sensible self-consciousness, and thus little or no religious life. We may give to this condition, in its most extreme form, the name of *God-lessness,* or, better, *God-forgetfulness.* But we must not think this means a state in which it is quite impossible for the God-consciousness to be kindled. For if that were so, then, in the first place, the lack of a thing which lay outside of one's nature could not be felt to be an evil condition; and in the second place, a recreating in the strict sense would then be needed in order to make good this lack, and that is not included in the idea of redemption. The possibility, then, of kindling the God-consciousness remains in reserve even where the evil condition of that consciousness is painted in the darkest colours.[3] Hence we can only designate it as an absence of facility for introducing the God-consciousness into the course of our actual lives and retaining it there. This certainly makes it seem as if these two conditions, that which exists before redemption and that which is to be brought about by redemption, could only be distinguished in an indefinite way, as a more and a less; and so, if the idea of redemption is to be clearly established, there arises the problem of reducing this indefinite distinction to a relative opposition. Such an opposition lies in the following formulae. Given an activity of the sensible self-consciousness, to occupy a moment of time and to connect it with another: its 'exponent' or 'index' will be greater than that of the higher self-consciousness for uniting itself therewith; and given an activity of the higher self-consciousness, to occupy a moment of time through union with a determina-

[2] [This does not apply as precisely to the English word *redemption* as to the German word *Erlösung,* which primarily means release or deliverance.—Transl.]

[3] Rom. 1:18 ff.

tion of the sensible, its 'exponent' or 'index' will be less than that of the activity of the sensible for completing the moment for itself alone. Under these conditions no satisfaction of the impulse towards the God-consciousness will be possible; and so, if such a satisfaction is to be attained, a redemption is necessary, since this condition is nothing but a kind of imprisonment or constraint of the feeling of absolute dependence. These formulae, however, do not imply that in all moments which are so determined the God-consciousness or the feeling of absolute dependence is at zero, but only that in some respect it does not dominate the moment; and in proportion as that is the case the above designations of Godlessness and God-forgetfulness may fitly be applied to it.

3. The recognition of such a condition undeniably finds a place in all religious communions. For the aim of all penances and purifications is to put an end to the consciousness of this condition or to the condition itself. But our proposition establishes two points which in this connexion distinguish Christianity from all other religious communions. In the first place, in Christianity the incapacity and the redemption, and their connexion with each other, do not constitute simply one particular religious element among others, but all other religious emotions are related to this, and this accompanies all others, as the principal thing which makes them distinctively Christian. And secondly, redemption is posited as a thing which has been universally and completely accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth. And these two points, again, must not be separated from each other, but are essentially interconnected. Thus it could not by any means be said that Christian piety is attributable to every man who in all his religious moments is conscious of being in process of redemption, even if he stood in no relation to the person of Jesus or even knew nothing of Him—a case which, of course, will never arise. And no more could it be said that a man's religion is Christian if he traces it to Jesus, even supposing that therein he is not at all conscious of being in process of redemption—a case which also, of course, will never arise. The reference to redemption is in every Christian consciousness simply because the originator of the Christian communion is the Redeemer; and Jesus is Founder of a religious communion simply in the sense that its members become conscious of redemption through Him. Our previous exposition ensures that this will not be understood to mean that the whole religious consciousness of a Christian can have no other content than simply Jesus and redemption, but only that all religious moments, so far as they are free expressions of the feeling of absolute dependence, are set down as having come into existence through that redemption, and, so far as the feeling appears still unliberated, are set down as being in need of that redemption. It likewise goes without saying that, while this element is always present, different religious mo-

ments may and will possess it in varying degrees of strength or weakness, without thereby losing their Christian character. But it *would*, of course, follow from what has been said, that if we conceive of religious moments in which all reference to redemption is absent, and the image of the Redeemer is not introduced at all, these moments must be judged to belong no more intimately to Christianity than to any other monotheistic faith.

4. The more detailed elaboration of our propositions, as to how the redemption is effected by Christ and comes to consciousness within the Christian communion, falls to the share of the dogmatic system itself. Here, however, we have still to discuss, with reference to the general remarks we made above,[4] the relation of Christianity to the other principal monotheistic communions. These also are traced back each to an individual founder. Now if the difference of founder were the only difference, this would be a merely external difference, and the same thing would be true if these others likewise set up their founder as a redeemer and thus related everything to redemption. For that would mean that in all these religions the religious moments were of like content, only that the personality of the founder was different. But such is not the case: rather must we say that only through Jesus, and thus only in Christianity, has redemption become the central point of religion. For inasmuch as these other religions have instituted particular penances and purifications for particular things, and these are only particular parts of their doctrine and organization, the affecting of redemption does not appear as their main business. It appears rather as a derivative element. Their main business is the founding of the communion upon definite doctrine and in definite form. If, however, there are within the communion considerable differences in the free development of the God-consciousness, then some people, in whom it is most cramped, are more in need of redemption, and others, in whom it works more freely, are more capable of redemption; and thus through the influence of the latter there arises in the former an approximation to redemption; but only up to the point at which the difference between the two is more or less balanced, simply owing to the fact that there exists a communion or fellowship. In Christianity, on the other hand, the redeeming influence of the Founder is the primary element, and the communion exists only on this presupposition, and as a communication and propagation of that redeeming activity. Hence within Christianity these two tendenices always rise and fall together: the tendency to give pre-eminence to the redeeming work of Christ, and the tendency to ascribe great values to the distinctive and peculiar ele-

[4] §10.

ment in Christian piety. And the same is true of the two opposite tendencies: the tendency to regard Christianity simply as a means of advancing and propagating religion in general (its own distinctive nature being merely accidental and secondary), and the tendency to regard Christ principally as a teacher and the organizer of a communion, while putting the redeeming activity in the background.

Accordingly, in Christianity the relation of the Founder to the members of the communion is quite different from what it is in the other religions. For those other founders are represented as having been, as it were, arbitrarily elevated from the mass of similar or not very different men, and as receiving just as much for themselves as for other people whatever they do receive in the way of divine doctrine and precept. Thus even an adherent of those faiths will hardly deny that God could just as well have given the law through another as through Moses, and the revelation could just as well have been given through another as through Mohammed. But Christ is distinguished from all others as Redeemer alone and for all, and is in no wise regarded as having been at any time in need of redemption Himself; and is therefore separated from the beginning from all other men, and endowed with redeeming power from His birth.

Not that we mean here to exclude at the outset from the Christian communion all those who differ from this presentation of the matter (which is itself capable of manifold shades of variation) in holding that Christ was only later endowed with redeeming power, provided only that this power is recognized as something different from the mere communication of doctrine and rule of life. But if Christ is regarded entirely on the analogy of the founders of other religions, then the distinctive peculiarity of Christianity can only be asserted for the content of the doctrine and rule of life, and the three monotheistic faiths remain separate only in so far as each holds unflinchingly to what it has received. But now suppose them all together capable of advancing still to perfection, and suppose they were able to find for themselves, sooner or later, the better doctrines and precepts of Christianity: then the inward difference would entirely disappear. Suppose that finally the Christian Church is likewise to move on beyond what has been received from Christ: then nothing else remains for Christ but to be regarded as an outstanding point in the development, and this in such a sense that there is a redemption *from* Him as well as a redemption through Him. And since the perfecting principle can only be Reason, and this is everywhere the same, all distinction between the progress of Christianity and that of other monotheistic faiths would gradually disappear, and all alike would only have a validity limited to a definite period, so far as their distinctive character was concerned.

In this way the difference becomes clear between two widely divergent conceptions of Christianity. But at the same time the lines leading from the one to the other become visible. If the latter of the two conceptions were ever to present itself as a complete doctrine, such a communion would perhaps of its own accord sever its connexion with the other Christian communions. But otherwise it could still be recognized as a Christian communion, unless it actually declared itself to be now freed from the necessity of adherence to Christ. Still less should participation in the Christian communion be denied to *individuals* who approximate to that view, so long as they desire to maintain in themselves a living consciousness of God along with, and by means of, that communion.

5. This development of the argument will, it is hoped, serve to confirm what we have established for the purpose of determining the distinctive element of Christianity. For we have tried, as it were by way of experiment, to single out from among the common elements of Christian piety that element by which Christianity is most definitely distinguished externally; and in this attempt we were guided by the necessity of regarding the inner peculiarity and the outward delimitation in their interconnexion. Perhaps in a universal Philosophy of Religion, to which, if it were properly recognized, Apologetics could then appeal, the inner character of Christianity in itself could be exhibited in such a way that its particular place in the religious world would thereby be definitely fixed. This would also mean that all the principal moments of the religious consciousness would be systematized, and from their interconnexion it would be seen which of them were fitted to have all the others related to them and to be themselves a constant concomitant of all the others. If, then, it should be seen that the element which we call 'redemption' becomes such a moment as soon as a liberating fact enters a region where the God-consciousness was in a state of constraint, Christianity would in that case be vindicated as a distinct form of faith and its nature in a sense construed. But even this could not properly be called a proof of Christianity, since even the Philosophy of Religion could not establish any necessity, either to recognize a particular Fact as redemptive, or to give the central place actually in one's own consciousness to any particular moment, even though that moment should be capable of occupying such a place. Still less can this present account claim to be such a proof; for here, in accordance with the line we have taken, and since we can only start from a historical consideration, we cannot even pretend to do as much as might be done in a complete Philosophy of Religion. Moreover, it is obvious that an adherent of some other faith might perhaps be completely convinced by the above account that what we have set

forth is really the peculiar essence of Christianity, without being thereby so convinced that Christianity is actually the truth, as to feel compelled to accept it. Everything we say in this place is relative to Dogmatics, and Dogmatics is only for Christians; and so this account is only for those who live within the pale of Christianity, and is intended only to give guidance, in the interests of Dogmatics, for determining whether the expressions of any religious consciousness are Christian or not, and whether the Christian quality is strongly and clearly expressed in them or rather doubtfully. We entirely renounce all attempt to prove the truth or necessity of Christianity; and we presuppose, on the contrary, that every Christian, before he enters at all upon inquiries of this kind, has already the inward certainty that his religion cannot take any other form than this.

THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OF OBTAINING PARTICIPATION IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNION THAN THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS AS THE REDEEMER.

1. To participate in the Christian communion means to seek in Christ's institution an approximation to the above-described[5] state of absolute facility and constancy of religious emotions. No one can wish to belong to the Christian Church on any other ground. But since each can only enter through a free resolve of his own, this must be preceded by the certainty that the influence of Christ puts an end to the state of being in need of redemption, and produces that other state; and this certainty is just faith in Christ. That is to say, this term always signifies, in our present province, the certainty which accompanies a state of the higher self-consciousness, and which is therefore different from, but not for that reason less than, the certainty which accompanies the objective consciousness. In the same sense we spoke above[6] of faith in God, which was nothing but the certainty concerning the feeling of absolute dependence, as such, *i.e.* as conditioned by a Being placed outside of us, and as expressing our relation to that Being. The faith of which we are now speaking, however, is a purely factual certainty, but a certainty of a fact which is entirely inward. That is to say, it cannot exist in an individual until, through an impression which he has received from Christ, there is found in him a beginning—perhaps quite infinitesimal, but yet a real premonition—of the process which will put an end to the state of needing redemption. But the term "faith in Christ" here (as the term "faith in God" formerly) relates the state of redemption, as effect, to Christ as cause.

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[5] §5, 4.
[6] §4, 4.

That is how John describes it. And so from the beginning only those people have attached themselves to Christ in His new community whose religious self-consciousness had taken the form of a need of redemption, and who now became assured in themselves of Christ's redeeming power.[7] So that the more strongly those two phases appeared in any individual, the more able was he, by representation of the fact (which includes description of Christ and His work) to elicit this inward experience in others. Those in whom this took place became believers, and the rest did not.[8] This, moreover, is what has ever since constituted the essence of all direct Christian preaching. Such preaching must always take the form of testimony; testimony as to one's own experience, which shall arouse in others the desire to have the same experience. But the impression which all later believers received in this way from the influence of Christ, *i.e.* from the common Spirit communicated by Him and from the whole communion of Christians, supported by the historical representation of His life and character, was just the same impression which His contemporaries received from Him directly. Hence those who remained unbelieving were not blamed because they had not let themselves be persuaded by reasons, but simply because of their lack of self-knowledge, which must always be the explanation when the Redeemer is truly and correctly presented and people show themselves unable to recognize Him as such. But even Christ Himself represented this lack of self-knowledge, *i.e.* of the consciousness of needing redemption, as the limit to His activity. And so the ground of unbelief is the same in all ages, as is also the ground of belief or faith.

2. The attempt has often been made to demonstrate the necessity of redemption, but always in vain. We need not, however, appeal to these cases, for it is clear in itself that the thing is impossible. Any man who is capable of being satisfied with himself as he is will always manage to find a way out of the argument. And no more can it be demonstrated, once the consciousness of this need has been awakened, that Christ is the only One who can work redemption. In His own time there were many who did believe that redemption was near, and yet did not accept Him. And even when we have a more correct idea of the end to be sought, it is not easy to see how it could be proved that any particular individual is in a position to achieve the desired effect. For in this matter we are concerned with amount of spiritual power, which we have no means of calculating; and even if we had, we should also require some fixed datum against which the calculation

[7] John 1:45, 46; 6:68, 69; Matt. 16:15–18.
[8] Acts 2:37, 41.

could be set. It cannot even be proved in a general way that such a redemption is bound to come, even if we presuppose a general knowledge not only of what men are like but also of what God is like. There would still be plenty of room for different sophistical arguments to draw opposite conclusions from the same data, according as God's purpose for man was conceived in one way or in another.

Agree, then, that we must adhere to the kind of certainty which we have just described, and that faith is nothing other than the incipient experience of the satisfaction of that spiritual need by Christ: there can still be very diverse ways of experiencing the need and the succour, and yet they will all be faith. Moreover, the consciousness of need may be present for a long time in advance, or it may, as is often the case, be fully awakened only by the contrast which the perfection of Christ forms with our own condition, so that the two things come into existence simultaneously, the supreme consciousness of need and the beginning of its satisfaction.

3. It is true that in the Scriptures themselves proofs are often mentioned, which the witnesses of the Gospel employed.[9] Yet it is never asserted that faith sprang from the proof, but from the preaching. Those proofs were only applied among the Jews, with reference to their current ideas of the coming Messiah, in order to repulse the opposition presented by these ideas to the witness of the Gospel, or to anticipate any such opposition. This was an indispensable line of defence for witnesses of Christ who were Jews and who were dealing with Jews. If they wished to assert that they themselves had never expected any other kind of redemption than this, or that their expectations had been transformed by the appearing and the influence of Christ, they must either break with the whole Jewish religion, which they had no warrant for doing, or show that the prophetic representations were applicable to this Jesus as Redeemer. If we took the other view of the matter, it would mean that the faith of the Gentile Christians was not the same as that of the Jewish Christians; and then it would not have been possible for these two to become really one, but the Gentiles would have had to become Jews first, in order then to be brought to Christ by the authority of the prophets.

Postscript.—Our proposition says nothing of any intermediate link between faith and participation in the Christian communion, and is accordingly to be taken as directly combining the two, so that faith of itself carries with it that participation; and not only as depending on the spontaneous activity of the man who has become a believer, but also as depending on the spontaneous activity of the communion

[9] Acts 6:9, 10; 9:20–22; also 18:27, 28.

(Church), as the source from which the testimony proceeded for the awakening of faith. At the same time, in shutting up the whole process between these two points, the witness or testimony and its effect, our proposition is intended to make an end of everything which, in the form of demonstration, is usually brought to the aid of the proper witness or even substituted for it. This refers principally to the attempts to bring about a recognition of Christ by means of the miracles which He performs, or the prophecies which predicted Him, or the special character of the testimonies originally borne to Him, regarded as the work of divine inspiration. In all this there seems to be more or less illusion on the following point: that the efficacy of these things somehow always presupposes faith, and therefore cannot produce it.

First consider *Miracle,* taking the word in its narrower sense, so that prophecy and inspiration are not included, but simply phenomena in the realm of physical nature which are supposed not to have been caused in a natural manner. Whether we confine ourselves to those performed by Jesus Himself, or include those which took place in connexion with Him, these miracles cannot bring about a recognition of Him at all. In the first place, we know of these miracles only from those same Holy Scriptures (for the miracles related in less pure sources are never adduced along with them) which relate similar miracles of people who did not adhere to Christianity at all, but are rather to be reckoned among its enemies; and Scripture gives us no marks for distinguishing evidential miracles from non-evidential. But further, Scripture itself bears witness that faith has been produced without miracles, and also that miracles have failed to produce it; from which it may be concluded that even when it has existed along with miracles it was not produced by miracles but in its own original way. Hence if the purpose of miracles had been to produce faith, we should have to conclude that God's breaking into the order of Nature proved ineffectual. Accordingly, many find the purpose of miracles simply in the fact that they turn the attention to Christ. But this, again, is at least so far contradicted by Christ's oft-repeated command not to make the miracles more widely known, that we should have to limit their efficacy to the immediate eye-witnesses, and thus this efficacy would no longer exist to-day. But, finally, the following question cannot be avoided. In any other context than that of such faith and its realm, we may encounter any number of facts which we cannot explain naturally, and yet we never think of miracle, but simply regard the explanation as deferred until we have a more exact knowledge both of the fact in question and of the laws of Nature. But when such a fact occurs in connexion with some faith-realm which has to be established, we think at once of

miracle; only, each man claims miracle as real for the realm of his own faith alone, and sets down the others as false. On what is this distinction based? The question can hardly be answered except as follows. In general we do, perhaps, assume so exclusive a connexion between miracles and the formation of a new faith-realm, that we only admit miracle for this kind of case; but the state of each individual's faith determines his judgment of the alleged miracle, and so the miracle does not produce the faith. As regards that universal connexion, however, the state of the case seems to be as follows. Where a new point in the development of the spiritual life, and indeed primarily of the self-consciousness, is assumed to exist, new phenomena in physical Nature, mediated by the spiritual power which is manifested, are also expected, because both the contemplative and the outwardly active spiritual states all proceed from the self-consciousness, and are determined by its movements. Thus, once Christ is recognized as Redeemer, and consequently as the beginning of the supreme development of human nature in the realm of the self-consciousness, it is a natural assumption that, just because at the point where such an existence communicates itself most strongly, spiritual states appear which cannot be explained from what went before, He who exercises such a peculiar influence upon human nature around Him will be able, in virtue of the universal connexion of things, to manifest also a peculiar power of working upon the physical side of human nature and upon external Nature. That is to say, it is natural to expect miracles from Him who is the supreme divine revelation; and yet they can be called miracles only in a relative sense, since our ideas of the susceptibility of physical Nature to the influence of the spirit and of the causality of the will acting upon physical Nature are as far from being finally settled and as capable of being perpetually widened by new experiences as are our ideas of the forces of physical Nature themselves. Now, since, in connexion with the divine revelation in Christ, phenomena presented themselves which could be brought under this concept of miracle, it was natural that they should actually come to be regarded from this point of view, and adduced as confirmation of the fact that this was a new point of development. But this confirmation will be effectual only where there is already present a beginning of faith; failing that, the miracle would either be declared false or be reserved, as regards the understanding of it, for some natural explanation which the future would reveal. Still less could it be proved from the miracles which accompanied it that Christianity is the supreme revelation, since similar phenomena are on the same grounds to be expected in the lower faiths too, and miracles themselves cannot, as such, be divided into higher and

lower. Indeed, the possibility cannot be excluded that similar phenomena might occur even apart from all connexion with the realm of religion, whether as accompanying other kinds of development or as signalizing deeper movements in physical Nature itself. Similarly, on the other hand, it seems to be a matter of course that such supernatural phenomena, which accompany revelation, disappear again in proportion as the new development, freed from its point of origin in the external realm, is organized, and so becomes Nature.

The same thing may be said with regard to *Prophecies,* in case anyone should wish to assign to them a more powerful role than that which we have granted above. Let us confine ourselves to the prophecies of the Jewish prophets regarding Christ, for in more recent times the heathen prophecies have been universally set aside, and we are not here immediately concerned with the prophecies of Christ and His apostles. Suppose, then, that we wished to make more use of those prophetic utterances among Jews. It is quite conceivable that a Jew should become a Christian because he came to see that those prophecies were to be referred to Jesus, and that nevertheless he should possess neither the real faith nor the true participation in the Christian communion, understanding it all, perhaps, in a quite different way, because he did not feel any need of redemption. But suppose these prophecies were to be universally set before unbelievers, in order to produce in them the will to enter into communion with Christ. It might be made out at the start that these prophecies are all to be regarded as belonging together, that they all have in view an individual, and indeed one and the same individual (for otherwise the fulfilment of them all in one and the same person would really be a non-fulfilment), and further that they have all come to fulfilment in Christ, each in the sense in which it was meant, not those figuratively meant being fulfilled in a literal sense and those literally meant in a figurative sense (for that also would not be a real fulfilment). But, after all, it always comes to this in the end: that Jesus must be taken to be the Redeemer, because the Redeemer was predicted with descriptive details which are found in Him. But this argument presupposes that people already have faith in the prophets who predicted, as such; and it is impossible to imagine how an unbeliever outside of Judaism should come to have such a faith, except on the supposition that the inspiration of the prophets is proved to him, and with this we shall deal below. Without such a faith the collocation of prophecies and their fulfilments would be a mere sign-post, giving an impulse to seek fellowship with Christ only to those people who were already feeling the need of redemption; and this only in so far as the need expressed in the prophecies is analogous to their own, and at the same time the thing prophesied has a manifest

connexion with that need;[10] that is to say, in so far as each man could himself have prophesied the same thing out of his own need. The impulse, however, could only issue in his seeking to have the experience for himself,[11] and only when this attempt succeeded would there be faith. And certainly this impulse can now, when facts speak so loud, be given much more powerfully and surely in other ways than by means of the prophecies. This becomes especially clear when we reflect how the case really stands with regard to the above-mentioned presuppositions; namely, that it can never be proved that those prophets foresaw Christ as He really was, and still less the Messianic kingdom as it really developed in Christianity. Thus it must be admitted that a proof from prophecy of Christ as the Redeemer is impossible; and in particular, the zealous attempt to seek out for this purpose prophecies or prototypes which relate to accidental circumstances in the story of Christ must appear simply as a mistake. A clear distinction must, therefore, be made between the apologetical use which the apostles made of the prophecies in their intercourse with the Jews, and a general use which might be made of them as evidences. When, however, faith in the Redeemer is already present, then we can dwell with great pleasure on all expressions of the longing for redemption awakened by earlier and inadequate revelations. And this is the real significance (and it has, of course, a confirmative and corroborative value) of Messianic prophecies, wherever they appear and in however obscure presentiments they are shrouded: they disclose to us a striving of human nature towards Christianity, and at the same time give it as the confession of the best and most inspired of earlier religious communions, that they are to be regarded only as preparatory and transitory institutions. As for the prophecies made by Christianity itself, it is, of course, natural that at the beginning of the development of a new thing the outlook is directed very much towards the future, *i.e.* towards its completion, and so one can understand the questions of the disciples, to which answers —on the basis of which they afterwards made further prophecies— could not altogether be denied. But Christ's prophecies cannot serve as a proof of His unique office and His exclusive vocation as Redeemer, for the simple reason that others also have admittedly prophesied. Again, it was equally natural that the more the new dispensation became established as an historical phenomenon, the more the interest in the future decreased and prophecy disappeared.

Now from all this it follows that, if faith in the revelation of God in

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[10] In this sense perhaps the prophecy quoted in Matt. 12:19, 20 is the most pregnant prophecy.

[11] John 1:41, 46.

Christ and in redemption through Him has not already arisen in the direct way through experience as the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, neither miracles nor prophecies can produce it, and indeed that this faith would be just as immovable even if Christianity had neither prophecies nor miracles to show. For the lack of these could never refute that demonstration, or prove a mere delusion the experience of need satisfied in the fellowship of Christ. From the lack of these, indeed, nothing could be concluded except that those natural assumptions do not always prove true, and that the beginning of the most perfect form of religious self-consciousness appeared more suddenly, and confined its working more closely to its own immediate realm.

We come finally to *Inspiration.* In Christianity this conception has a wholly subordinate significance. It cannot be related at all to Christ, since the divine revelation through Him, however it is conceived, is always conceived as identical with His whole being, and not as appearing fragmentarily in sporadic moments. And as for what the apostles received from the Spirit, Christ traces that entirely to His own instruction, and those who through their testimony became believers did not believe because the testimony sprang from inspiration, for of that they knew nothing. The conception therefore relates only in the first place to the prophets of the Old Covenant, and in the second place to the composition of the New Testament Scriptures; and so we have to deal with it here only in so far as concerns the attempt to compel faith demonstratively by means of Holy Scripture, when this is first assumed to be inspired. But as regards the Old Testament, Prophecy cannot be understood alone without Law and History; and this whole, taken all together, is so consistently theocratic that (while we can indeed distinguish in it two "poles," one of which exercises attraction, the other repulsion, towards the New Testament), if, apart from the New Testament, we succeeded in making anyone believe in the prophetic inspiration (which, however, could hardly be accomplished except upon their own testimony that the word of God came to them), yet from this there could not be developed a faith in Christ as the end of the Law. We shall rather express the whole truth if we say that we believe in the prophetic inspiration simply because of the use which Christ and His apostles make of the utterances of the prophets. As regards the New Testament, the faith had been disseminated for two hundred years before that Testament was unanimously established as having peculiar validity. And, moreover, it was not a matter of Christian faith being in the meantime always mediated by faith in the Old Testament, for among the great mass of the heathen, who went over to Christianity without having been previously Judaized, this was by no means the

case. But even now, and even supposing that the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures can be proved from these Scriptures themselves, this would nevertheless presuppose a very perfect understanding of these Scriptures. And thus, since this is possible only for a few, we should still require some other way in which faith might arise, so that there would be two kinds of faith. And further, it is still impossible to see how an objective conviction of this kind could exercise such an influence on the self-consciousness, that, from the mere knowledge that those people were inspired who asserted that men need redemption and that Christ is their Redeemer, this assertion would immediately come to contain for all an inward truth. All that this conviction in itself can do is merely to give an impulse towards the awakening of a further self-consciousness and towards the winning of a total impression of Christ; and only from this will faith then proceed.

The result of what Schleiermacher calls a restored God-consciousness is what might today be called "true secularity," or the right discernment of the sacred as touching all points of living experience.[8] He is concerned to establish religious awareness—"the moment"—as the "indispensable third" underlying thought and action, science and morality. Yet his perspective looks ahead to a still more open style of faith thinking. His theology gives little comfort to those who try to separate clearly the religious from the profane, or the thought and language of faith from the ordinary and everyday. The goal of the redemption focused in Jesus Christ, he believes, is the elimination of precisely such false distinctions or divisions. Redemption has as its aim a state of being in which the creature is—quite fittingly—open to his Creator. Thus man himself is to share in shaping a personal-social life in the world which will express the purpose of God as shown in Jesus of Nazareth.

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[8] The controlling image here is that of Jesus of Nazareth, with his claim to ultimacy as a truly "secular saint." For Schleiermacher, Jesus lives in the communal life and memory as one whose God-consciousness is most fully particularized and universalized. Because his being is utterly "transparent" (Tillich's term does not come amiss here) to its ultimate ground, he can be most radically finite or secular. Compare also the Kierkegaardian "knight of faith," who is in many ways a model or or paradigm of a secular saint. See *Fear and Trembling*, Walter Lowrie, trans. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 38–64.

4. Faith and Fact in Hegel, Strauss, and Feuerbach

We must pause here to mention very briefly three thinkers whose work we cannot include among our selections, but who left their mark on the faith-fact dialog. The first of these is the philosopher *G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831).** Hegel distinguishes between a rational truth (*Begriff*) and a pictorial or mythological notion (*Vorstellung*). The first is tied in with our sense experience, yet in such a way that the perceived form carries a universal meaning. The pure rational idea is logically "prior" to the sense form involved (i.e., more basic), though this is not necessarily the order in which we experience it. In a pictorial notion such as the incarnation, on the other hand, we have a specific historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, who at the same same time expresses the philosophical idea of the unity of God and man, of the eternal and the finite. This idea has reality through its universal element, which is nonsensuous. But it is clearly understood, as with Kant, that the archetype and the concrete phenomenal form are inseparable in external existence.

Where Hegel moves beyond Kant is in the elaboration of the "historical" and the "conceptual" as moments in the unfolding dialectic of the "Absolute." It is precisely the nature of reality to embody itself in concrete forms and then return to itself in new and dynamic synthesis. Universality moves into the world of finite detail—the particular—to concrete individuality. Thus the idea moves through nature to spirit. Nowadays we are apt to identify the concrete with empirical knowledge and the abstract with the conceptual. For Hegel the "abstract" is the undifferentiated Universal, and the movement through the historical to the rational is a movement toward concreteness. Surface understanding *(Verstand)* discerns this movement only where opposition is evident. But reason (*Vernunft*)—which penetrates to the "depth"—shares in the process, and perceives unity in difference. Thus Hegel makes room for both the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith—for the "figurative" and the "real," for the "mythical" and the "conceptual."

What Hegel, like Kant, tried to hold together was further split apart by some of his followers. *D. F. Strauss (1808–1874)*† sharply subordi-

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* *Born in Stuttgart, Germany. Studied theology at the university in Tübingen. Worked as a private tutor, newspaper editor, educational administrator, and university lecturer. Held major professorships at Heidelberg (1816–18) and Berlin (1818–31). Voluminous writer and undisputed head of the philosophical school known as Absolute Idealism. Developed some of the concepts central to our survey in* The Phenomenology of Mind, *especially the section entitled "Revealed Religion."*

† *German scholar born at Ludwigsburg in Württemberg. Studied in Tübingen. Was exposed to the thought of such men as Kant, Jacob Böhme, Schelling, and Schleiermacher. Found Hegelian philosophy the most congenial. Applied the presup-*

nates the mythological to the intellectual, whereas his teacher saw both the conceptual and the figurative as parts of an ordered process, each indispensable to the other. Hegel stressed the movement toward the concrete, contending that universality moves through particular detail to new levels of rationality. Strauss seeks out the intellectual concept (*Begriff*) *behind* the fictional, mythological notion (*Vorstellung*).

As to the relationship between the rational idea of God-manhood and its realization in the finite world by the historical Jesus, Strauss merely says that the Universal never expends itself totally in the particular! This is a dictum from which he never wavers. Rational truth does not depend upon the accidents of history. Lessing's big ditch is here with a vengeance. Strauss is not so much interested in the way history may become a vehicle for faith in terms of moral power, as in the way history may be transformed into rational idea.

Strauss does not totally divorce the idea from its sense form. He does not deny that the historical personality of Jesus has conveyed to us an awareness of the unity of Godhood and manhood. Jesus is in fact to be credited with calling into life among men the rational *idea* which is itself the eternal depth of his own personality. Yet the relative independence of this idea, as compared with its incarnation in fact, frees one from the need for a critical reconstruction of Jesus' life. Moreover, the perfect embodiment of the idea in Jesus of Nazareth is not really essential for conveying to humanity the awareness of God-manhood. Note how Albert Schweitzer summarizes this.

> God-manhood, the highest idea conceived by human thought, is actually realized in the historic personality of Jesus. But while conventional thinking supposes that this phenomenal realization must be perfect, true thought, which has attained by genuine critical reasoning to a higher freedom, knows that no idea can realize itself perfectly on the historic plane, and that its truth does not depend on the proof of its having received perfect external representation, but that its perfection comes about through that which the idea carries into history, or through the way in which history is sublimated into idea. For this reason it is in the last analysis indifferent to what extent God-manhood has been realized in the person of Jesus; the important thing is that the idea is now alive in the common consciousness of those who have been prepared to receive it by its manifestation in sensi-

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positions of Idealism to a study of the New Testament. Was plunged into controversy with the publication of his most famous work, Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet (Life of Jesus, a critical Treatment), *in 1835–36. Challenged the prevailing assumption in his day that one can discover a "historical core" to the life of Jesus. Sought to show how mythical elements completely pervade the scriptural accounts. Found the true basis of faith in intellectual understanding rather than more figurative or popular matters of belief.*

ble form, and of whose thought and imagination that historical personality took such complete possession, that for them the unity of Godhood and manhood assumed in Him enters into the common consciousness, and the "moments" which constitute the outward course of His life reproduce themselves in them in a spiritual fashion.[1]

*Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872)** begins and ends his theology with man. His stated aim, indeed, is to "exalt anthropology to theology."[2] Anticipating tendencies later found in Freud and others, he remarks that we do not start with a being addressed as "God" and then attribute qualities to him as the subject of our thinking. Our starting point is sensuous reality. We begin with human predicates, human desires, and then see God as their projection and fulfillment. God's position and role as subject is a reflection of humanity. He is made in man's image rather than the other way around. Concreteness is to be found in sensuous empirical reality. By locating it thus, Feuerbach turns Hegel upside down—and it was from Feuerbach that Karl Marx derived his interpretation of Hegel, resulting in a form of dialectical materialism. Even references to God are misplaced unless he is clearly viewed as the "epitome of the generic human qualities."

Strauss had devoted himself to uncovering the rational idea behind the figurative or mythological form. Feuerbach approaches the "abstract" (speech about God) through the "concrete" (actuality of life as co-humanity). He is concerned to elevate speech about "man with man" into speech about deity, but the movement is clearly from the sensuous to the nonsensuous. For Feuerbach sensuous, empirical experience is prior in order of *being*, no less than temporally prior, in order of *knowing*.

The mystery of the incarnation is divine love, or the contemplation of the "humanity of God." Love is the fundamental reality of all that

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[1] *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), pp. 79 f.

* *Noted philosopher and theologian in the tradition of Absolute Idealism. Born in Landshut, Germany of a family distinguished by men of letters and artistic talents. Studied theology at Heidelberg. Shifted to philosophy at Berlin under Hegel's tutelage. Worked for some years as a* Privatdozent *at the University of Erlangen. His two most important writings are* The Essence of Christianity *(1841) and* The Essence of Religion *(1851). Carried a man-centered tendency in religion to extreme. Wanted to change "the friends of God into friends of man, believers into thinkers, worshippers into workers, candidates for the other world into students of this world, Christians, who on their own confession are half-animal and half-angel, into men—whole men." (Quoted by Karl Barth in "An Introductory Essay," in Ludwig Feuerbach,* The Essence of Christianity *[New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957], p. xi.)*

[2] See *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. xxxv–xxxix, 140–49.

exists. Feuerbach will not allow this to be reduced to a quality which is then attributed to God as a personal subject. The very earthy reality of love—of one human being open to another—is really the subject, of which in a sense "God" is the attribute. When one focuses upon the incarnation as "essence" and "appearance" (Feuerbach's somewhat tangential way of handling the faith-fact issue), again the priority is with love. For love abides, while the incarnation as a fact in time and place is a relative and passing phenomenon. Only love is eternal and universal. But the "essence" of the incarnation is no less sensuous and empirical than its "appearance." Essence is not a timeless archetype, but fully human love: man as the *ens realissimum,* the ultimate independent being. The appearance of such love in an historical person—the union of an "I" and a "Thou"—is not the metaphysical mystery of a supernatural being who has become man. It is the mystery of *man's* innermost capacity, grounded in the very heart of humanity, which has come to the light of day.

We shall see later, in summarizing, how these strands weave into the total pattern of thought developed in the faith-fact story. Let us turn now to another of the great thinkers who have profoundly influenced our own time.

5. Soren Kierkegaard

1813-1855

Danish Lutheran theologian, philosopher, author. One of seven children of a wealthy wool merchant. Except for sojourns in Germany, lived all his life in Copenhagen without need to earn a living. Unhappy childhood and personal life, but moved in chief artistic and literary circles of his day. Theological degree from Copenhagen University. In 1843 published Either-Or, *and the whole bulk of his writing within the next twelve years before his death at forty-two. Somber, brilliant dialectician, ironic and poetic, bitterly attacked the Hegelian "system" as well as the stolidly conventional ("un-Christian") contemporary Church, including respected figures among clergy and theologians—yet remained loyally in and part of the Church. Unintentional founder, or originator, of the movement known as* existentialism.

"I must learn to understand what is essential for my existence, what is the truth for me, for which I am willing to live and die, through which I am firmly established in the divine, even though heaven and earth pass away."—Diary entry from 1835, first known use of the term *existence* in its modern connotations.

"Without risk there is no faith."

With Kierkegaard the faith-fact issue is put in a way that oddly echoes Lessing. How can one's eternal blessedness be dependent upon a concrete historical moment or point of departure? In view once again is the broad ditch between accidental truths of history, with their changing, relative, secondhand character, and the necessary truths of reason. But reason, we shall see, does not stand to Kierkegaard for universal truth.

The whole question of the "lack of contemporaneousness between Christ, the apostles and ourselves," to use Barth's later phrase, becomes acute in our next selection. Lessing, the reader will remember, seemed at first concerned by his eighteenth-century distance from the miracles and prophecies—the "wonders" of Jesus' life as told in the New Testament. He noted that times have changed. Although in Origen's day such miracles (according to the Church Father) still happened, in his own

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A voluminous writer, with such key works as: Fear and Trembling *(1843),* Philosophical Fragments *(1844) and* Concluding Unscientific Postscript *(1846). The reader will find useful in grasping the range of Kierkegaard's thought* A Kierkegaard Anthology, *Robert Bretall, ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951).*

time Lessing finds that they do not. But as we pursue the argument, it is plainly the secondhandedness of external "knowledge" that bothers him, not its remoteness in time. He cannot feel sure of anything he does not experience at first hand, though it may have happened no later than yesterday. The moral teachings of Jesus, however, have absolutely firsthand authenticity for our lives. We know their validity, both in practice and by inner recognition.

Kant went so far in the matter of human power to recognize moral truths as to be almost uninterested in the historical process. He does note that it tends to hinder ("spoil") man in the use of his inner sense of truth, by making him pay attention to tradition. He is biased in favor of a pure religion of reason, or "natural religion," as compared with ecclesiastical or "learned" religion. Yet one feels that faith and fact still mingle for him with at least relative compatibility as the Church militant moves toward the Church triumphant. He sees Jesus as a divinely sent teacher who gave circulation to many truths not earlier recognized by mankind. Kant is in no embarrassment as to our own relation to Jesus, and clearly subordinates considerations of an historical Redeemer to the belief in a moral disposition within man himself and the possibilities of a better life inherent in it.

Schleiermacher, inversely, finds the teacher—the Redeemer—so enormously important as to be the very core and meaning of Christianity. To him and to the fact of his life we are related by an inner movement of the spirit. This makes the details of history relatively secondary except for the one great fact of our redemption through the life and cross of Christ. Thus faith is tied to fact as an inward relationship. Not fact in general, but the very particular fact of Jesus of Nazareth and the redemption accomplished in him, as this comes alive and is shared within the believing and witnessing community.

Kierkegaard now comes back with full force to the question of the "contemporary disciple" and who this really is. In the following selection he explores what is meant by the historical point of departure for eternal consciousness. We have seen that Lessing, Kant, and Schleiermacher were, each in his own way, able to establish a sureness of faith in contact with something universal. They were all able to find something profoundly satisfying through the human experience of the immediate and the finite. For Lessing it was Jesus' moral teachings, for Kant the inherent moral sense of man, for Schleiermacher the inner movement of the human spirit as kindled by the Spirit of Christ. Thus the gulf was bridged.

For Kierkegaard, on the contrary, the gulf is greater than even Lessing's "ugly, broad ditch." It is, in fact, never really bridged, and in this he finds his great *Paradox*, his *Moment*. Here the condition is given

to man by which he is able to gain "eternal consciousness." That condition is faith, the "happy passion" that comes "when Reason sets itself aside, and the Paradox bestows itself." This is achieved in the very face of obvious absurdity. For it is absurd to have a limited, historical point of departure for eternal consciousness. Even more overwhelmingly absurd, in a certain sense, is the fact that in this one instance the eternal should, indeed, *be* historical: the God-man. It is astounding to human reason.

This is a far cry from faith as defined by Kant: the mere acceptance of a certain basic moral religion or system of doctrinal details. Kierkegaard's faith, by contrast, is more on the order of a recent poetic formulation with which the English-speaking world is familiar: "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. . . ."[1]

For this Danish thinker, it is the Teacher who gives the condition, the power, by which man is able to perceive eternal things. It does not come about in any other way, or from any other source. In order to be able to impart the eternal, that Teacher must be God. And in order to be able to put man in true possession of it, he must be man. This contradiction is part of the paradox. Therefore the Teacher—not the teachings—is the object of faith. Faith, too, is paradoxical, is itself a miracle.

Kierkegaard explores these matters and the disciple's relation to the Teacher against a background of constant allusion to the Socratic method. Here a teacher's importance fades and is meant to dwindle and disappear as the disciple becomes more and more independent, finding the truth in or by himself. The Socratic assumption (somewhat on the order of Kant's) is that all men are endowed from the beginning with the condition for understanding. A mere exercise of the will can carry them along the path toward truth.

But all our willing is of no avail, says Kierkegaard, for the understanding of eternal truth. In the moment of encounter with the *Paradox* the Teacher is all-important, and remains forever so.

In his account of several kinds of discipleship, both illusory and genuine (including a grave little inversion, in a sort of parable, of the childhood tale of the Emperor's Clothes), Kierkegaard shows with

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[1] From the Christmas greeting of King George VI to his people in December 1939: "And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: 'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light and safer than a known way.'" Quoted from M. L. Haskins, "Proem" to *God Knows* (may be found in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations* [13th ed.; Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1955], p. 881b). An excellent expression on a poetic level of the covenant with uncertainty, so to speak, that is at the heart of all existentialism, first clearly seen in our discussion at this point.

utmost clarity the unimportance of being an historical contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth. For in the ordinary way of things, history and eternity never meet. Any number of spies or assistants, keeping track day and night of Jesus' life and sayings in his very presence—no matter how accurately—could not create faith in a human being. Unless within himself he encountered the *Paradox,* man would still see only the outward appearance, as indeed many must have done in Jesus' day. And the same holds true now. The paradox, the moment, is as much to be met—and as easy to avoid—as in actual presence of the historical Christ.

Since the condition of faith is given only through the disciple being known by his Teacher, every human being, past or present, has the same great possibility of encounter. Christ, the object of faith, involves this contradiction, and faith itself cannot escape the tension that derives from it. Between time and eternity, between fact and faith, stands the paradox of the God-man.

Clearly this is not a case of faith being related to history as a rational principle to its illustration, in the manner of the Enlightenment. Nor does history simply produce faith, bring faith in its train, as Kierkegaard's contemporaries seemed to assume. This was particularly expressed in the local Danish attitude that to be decent, socially alert, and patriotic is the equivalent of being a Christian. So conventional culture appears in Kierkegaard's polemical attacks on the religious establishment. In some of his most biting satire he ridicules what he calls the "approximation process," man's gradual "oozing into faith" through the sheer backwash of accumulative tradition. But historical knowledge has only very relative, unstable evidence to offer. How silly to seek refuge in objective inquiry and its approximations! The ironic results, if one takes this line in the drama of faith, Kierkegaard notes as follows (though the Danish bite comes through clumsily in English):

> With the help of the approximation-process the absurd becomes something different; it becomes probable, it becomes increasingly probable, it becomes extremely and emphatically probable. Now he is ready to believe it, and he ventures to claim for himself that he does not believe as shoemakers and tailors and simple folk believe, but only after long deliberation. Now he is ready to believe it; and lo, now it has become precisely impossible to believe it. Anything that is almost probable, or probable, or extremely probable, or extremely and emphatically probable, is something he can almost know, or as good as know, or extremely and emphatically almost *know*—but it is impossible to believe. For the absurd is the object of faith, and the only object that can be believed.[2]

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[2] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* David F. Swenson, trans., and Walter Lowrie, ed. (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 189.

There is simply no direct line from the evidence of history to faith. One must choose, and choose in the dark. *Either* offense, the sin of disbelief, *or* discipleship—unbelief or the miracle of faith—Jesus the fanatic or Christ the God-man!

But if the faith-fact relationship is not that of a clear unity or rapport, with not even a reliable narrow bridge at some well-defined point, still, for Kierkegaard it is not a complete disconnection. The historical, factual point of departure and eternal blessedness are joined in the moment when the absolute paradox of the God-man and the gift of faith are united. As in Michelangelo's painting of Adam coming to life: though the gulf is not really bridged, a spark goes across it. The eyes of faith are opened.

The key term here is not mediation (as in Hegel's mind and later Schleiermacher's perspective) but *Paradox*. For here Teacher and learner, truth and the human condition for receiving it, are simultaneously present. Eternity meets time, and the *absurd*—the "reasonably" unbelievable—makes its final claim of passionate decision from the individual. History loses its quality of sheer retrospect and we become contemporary with Christ through the "leap" of faith. History loses its accidental, and incidental, character through the deep inwardness of faith. It loses its uncertainty and relativity through the deep certitude of passion and total commitment.

What Kierkegaard calls for above all else is the courage to believe, in the face of the absurd. This is the courage to turn to God in his absence from our living consciousness, as a *Thou* worthy of trust even though always beyond our grasp. This is to speak to the void as if filled—though filled only to the eyes of faith and not of sight. Such courage affirms that God can be known in his hiddenness and his distance, because the silence of the universe has been broken by the hammer of nails and the cry of dereliction from the cross.

Such courage stands before truth nailed on a tree, which neither compels nor coerces, which allows neither idolatry nor indifference. It is a courage that knows how quickly faith becomes idolatrous, trying to possess what can only be shared, trying to turn "crucified Truth" into dogma or institutional establishment.[3] It therefore faces the emptiness

[3] The allusion here is to Nicolas Berdyaev's commentary on Dostoevsky's "parable of the Grand Inquisitor" from *The Brothers Karamazov*. Berdyaev has captured something of the spirit and mood of Kierkegaard no less than Dostoevsky. He writes: "A divine Truth panoplied in power, triumphant over the world and conquering souls, would not be consonant with the freedom of man's spirit, and so the mystery of Golgotha is the mystery of liberty; the Son of God had to be crucified by the princes of this world in order that human freedom might be established and emphasized. The act of faith is an act of liberty, the world's unconstrained recogni-

and the silence in order to learn what the Teacher means to convey by his presence, of which the only token is the cross. But faith lives even in the waiting. Objective uncertainty is precisely what marks passion and commitment as authentic.

In 1844, at the age of thirty-one, Kierkegaard published his *Philosophical Fragments.* This was the next to last in a series of writings he brought out under various pseudonyms (though with his own name on the title page as sponsor, so that someone would stand responsible for the publication). In a later note he explained that these "authors" were "ideal personalities" who could express themselves with a freedom not possible to an actual person in an actual situation in life. The following excerpt is from Chapter IV of this work, from about the fourth page to the end of the essay.

(Reprinted from Søren Kierkegaard, under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, "The Case of the Contemporary Disciple," *Philosophical Fragments,* David F. Swenson, trans. and intro., Howard V. Hong, revised trans. by permission of Princeton University Press [Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1962], pp. 72–88. The single footnote is the writer's.)

THE CASE OF THE CONTEMPORARY DISCIPLE

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Here at the outset let us take care to make it clear that the question of an historical point of departure arises even for a contemporary disciple; for if we are not careful here, we shall meet with an insuperable difficulty later, when we come to deal with the case of the disciple whom we call the disciple at second hand. The contemporary disciple gets an historical point of departure for his eternal consciousness as well as any later disciple; for he is contemporary with precisely that historical phenomenon which refuses to be reduced to a moment of merely occasional significance, but proposes to interest him in another sense than the merely historical, presenting itself to him as a condition for his

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tion of unseen things. Christ the Son of God, sitting at the right hand of the Father, can be seen only by a free act of faith, and he who so believes will witness the resurrection of the Crucified in glory. But the unbeliever, obsessed by the world of visible things, sees only the shameful punishment of a carpenter called Jesus, the downfall of one who had thought himself to be divine truth itself. There lies the whole secret of Christianity, and every time in history that man has tried to turn crucified Truth into coercive truth he has betrayed the fundamental principle of Christ." Nicolas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky,* Donald Attwater, trans. (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), pp. 197 ff.

eternal happiness. If this is not so, then (deducing the consequences conversely) the Teacher is not the God but only a Socrates, and if he does not conduct himself like a Socrates, he is not even a Socrates.

But how does the learner come to realize an understanding with this Paradox? We do not ask that he understand the Paradox but only understand that this is the Paradox. How this takes place we have already shown. It comes to pass when the Reason and the Paradox encounter one another happily in the Moment when the Reason sets itself aside and the Paradox bestows itself. The third entity in which this union is realized (for it is not realized in the Reason, since it is set aside: nor in the Paradox, which bestows itself—hence it is realized *in* something) is that happy passion to which we will now assign a name, though it is not the name that so much matters. We shall call this passion: *Faith*. This then must be the condition of which we have spoken, which the Paradox contributes. Let us not forget that if the Paradox does not grant this condition the learner must be in possession of it. But if the learner is in possession of the condition he is *eo ipso* himself the Truth, and the moment is merely the moment of occasion.

The contemporary learner finds it easy enough to acquire adequate historical information. But let us not forget that with respect to the Teacher's birth he will be in the same position as the disciple at second hand; if we wish to urge absolute historical precision there will be only one human being who is fully informed, namely the woman of whom he permitted himself to be born. But though a contemporary learner readily becomes an historical eye-witness, the difficulty is that the knowledge of some historical circumstance, or indeed a knowledge of all the circumstances with the reliability of an eye-witness, does not make such an eye-witness a disciple; which is apparent from the fact that this knowledge has merely historical significance for him. We see at once that the historical in the more concrete sense is a matter of indifference; we may suppose a degree of ignorance with respect to it, and permit this ignorance as if to annihilate one detail after the other, historically annihilating the historical; if only the Moment remains, as point of departure for the Eternal, the Paradox will be there. Suppose a contemporary who had reduced his hours of sleep to a minimum in order that he might follow this Teacher about, attending him more closely than the pilot-fish the shark; suppose him to keep a hundred spies in his service to watch over the Teacher everywhere, conferring with them each evening in order to obtain a description of the Teacher's movements exact to the minutest detail, accounting for what he had said and where he had been each hour of the day, because his zeal led him to attach importance even to the least trifle—would such a contemporary be the disciple? By no means. If he is accused of historical

inaccuracy he can wash his hands of the accusation, but that is all. Suppose another contemporary who concerned himself solely with the doctrine which this Teacher was wont upon occasion to expound. If every word of instruction that fell from his lips seemed more important to him than his daily bread; if he kept a hundred assistants watching for every syllable, so that nothing should be lost; if he conferred with them carefully each evening, in order to obtain a presentation of the doctrine that should have the highest possible reliability—would he on this account be the disciple? By no means, no more than Plato was a disciple of Socrates. Suppose that a contemporary who had been living abroad returned at a time when the Teacher had only a day or two to live. If engagements had prevented him from going to see the Teacher, so that he was brought into touch with him only at the last moment, when he was about to yield his spirit—would this historical ignorance prevent him from becoming the disciple, provided the Moment became for him decisive for eternity? For the first contemporary, the life of the Teacher was merely an historical event; for the second, the Teacher served as an occasion by which he came to an understanding of himself, and he will be able to forget the Teacher. As over against an eternal understanding of oneself, any knowledge about the Teacher is accidental and historical only, a mere matter of memory. As long as the Eternal and the historical are external to one another, the historical is merely an occasion. If then such a zealous learner, though not carrying things so far as to become a disciple, were to discourse loudly and volubly of how much he owed the Teacher, so that his eulogy was almost endless and its gilding priceless; if he were to resent our explanation that the Teacher had been merely an occasion, neither his eulogy nor his resentment could further our inquiry, since both had the same ground, namely, that though lacking in the courage to understand he had nevertheless not lacked the audacity to go beyond. By romancing and trumpeting in this manner one only deceives oneself and others, in so far as one persuades oneself and others that one really has thoughts—since one owes them to another. Though politeness is ordinarily not supposed to cost anything, such politeness as his is dearly purchased. The enthusiastic outpouring of gratitude, perhaps itself not devoid of tears nor without a moving effect upon others, is a misunderstanding; for the thoughts that such a man has he certainly does not owe to another, and the nonsense he talks is all his own. Ah, how often has it not happened that someone has politely insisted upon owing Socrates a great debt, although he owed Socrates absolutely nothing! Whoever understands Socrates best understands precisely that he owes him nothing, which is as Socrates would have it, and which it is beautiful to have been able to will; whoever believes that he owes Socrates so great a debt may be tolerably

certain that Socrates stands ready to acquit him of it without payment, since it will doubtless cause him regret to learn that he has unwittingly furnished anyone with capital for such usurious speculations. But if the entire situation is non-Socratic, as we have assumed, the disciple will owe *all* to the Teacher; which is quite impossible in relation to Socrates, since as he himself says, he was unable to *beget*. This relationship of owing all to the Teacher cannot be expressed in terms of romancing and trumpeting, but only in that happy passion we call Faith, whose object is the Paradox. But the Paradox unites the contradictories, and is the historical made eternal, and the Eternal made historical. Everyone who understands the Paradox differently may keep the honor of having explained it, which honor he won by not being content to understand it.

It is easy to see, though it scarcely needs to be pointed out, since it is involved in the fact that the Reason is set aside, that Faith is not a form of knowledge; for all knowledge is either a knowledge of the Eternal, excluding the temporal and historical as indifferent, or it is pure historical knowledge. No knowledge can have for its object the absurdity that the Eternal is the historical. If I know Spinoza's doctrine, then I am in so far not concerned with Spinoza but with his doctrine; at some other time I may be concerned historically with Spinoza himself. But the disciple is in Faith so related to his Teacher as to be eternally concerned with his historical existence.

Now if we assume that it is as we have supposed (and without this assumption we return to the Socratic order of things), that the Teacher himself contributes the condition to the learner, it will follow that the object of Faith is not the *teaching* but the *Teacher*. The Socratic principle is, that the learner being himself the Truth and in possession of the condition can thrust the teacher aside; the Socratic art and the Socratic heroism consisted precisely in helping men to do this. But Faith must steadily hold fast to the Teacher. In order that he may have the power to give the condition the Teacher must be the God; in order that he may be able to put the learner in possession of it he must be Man. This contradiction is again the object of Faith, and is the Paradox, the Moment. That the God has once for all given man the requisite condition is the eternal Socratic presupposition, which comes into no hostile collision with time, but is incommensurable with the temporal and its determinations. The contradiction of our hypothesis is that man receives the condition in the Moment, the same condition which, since it is requisite for the understanding of the eternal Truth, is *eo ipso* an eternal condition. If the case is otherwise we stand at the Socratic principle of Recollection.

It is easy to see, though it scarcely needs to be pointed out, since it is

involved in the fact that the Reason is set aside, that Faith is not an act of will; for all human volition has its capacity within the scope of an underlying condition. Thus if I have the courage to will the understanding, I am able to understand the Socratic principle, i.e., to understand myself, because from the Socratic point of view I have the condition, and so have the power to will this understanding. But if I do not have the condition (and this is our assumption, in order not to be forced back on the Socratic order of things) all my willing is of no avail; although as soon as the condition is given, the Socratic principle will again apply.

The contemporary learner enjoys one advantage, which the learner of a later generation alas! will doubtless greatly envy him, if only for the sake of doing something. A contemporary may go where he can see the Teacher—and may he then believe his eyes? Why not? But may he also believe that this makes him a disciple? By no means. If he believes his eyes he is deceived, for the God is not immediately knowable. But then perhaps he may shut his eyes. Just so; but if he does, what profit does he have from his contemporaneity? And when he shuts his eyes he will presumably try to form some conception of the God. But if he is able to do this by himself, he is evidently in possession of the condition. What he conceives, moreover, will be a figure revealing itself to the inner eye of the soul; if he now beholds this, the figure of the servant will confuse him when he again opens his eyes. Let us go on. We have assumed that the Teacher dies; now that he is dead, what will the learner who had been his contemporary do? Perhaps he has sketched some portraits of him; he may even have in his possession an entire series of such portraits, depicting and accurately reflecting every change that by reason of age or state of mind may have taken place in the outward appearance of the Teacher. When he examines these portraits and assures himself that such and such was his appearance, may he then believe his eyes? Why not? But is he on that account a disciple? By no means. But then he may proceed to form some conception of the God. But the God cannot be conceived; it was for this very reason that he appeared in the form of a servant. And yet the servant-form is no deception; for if such were the case, this moment would not be the Moment, but an accidental circumstance, a mere appearance, which as an occasion infinitely vanishes in comparison with the Eternal. And if the learner had the power to form a conception of the God by himself, he must himself have had the condition. Thus he needed only a reminder to be enabled to form this conception, in a manner well within his capacity; though of this he may not previously have been aware. But if this is the case, the reminder will vanish instantly like a tiny atom in the eternal potentiality which was present in

his soul, and which now becomes a reality, but again as reality eternally presupposes itself.

How does the learner then become a believer or disciple? When the Reason is set aside and he receives the condition. When does he receive the condition? In the Moment. What does this condition condition? The understanding of the Eternal. But such a condition must be an eternal condition.—He receives accordingly the eternal condition in the Moment, and is aware that he has so received it; for otherwise he merely comes to himself in the consciousness that he had it from eternity. It is in the Moment that he receives it, and from the Teacher himself. All romancing and trumpeting abroad about one's cleverness in penetrating the God's incognito, though without receiving the condition from the Teacher; that one took notice of him by the impression he made, such a strange feeling coming over one in his presence; that there was a something in his voice and mien, etc., etc.—all this is but silly twaddle, by which one does not become a disciple but only makes a mockery of the God.[1] The servant-figure was no incognito. And when in the strength of his omnipotent resolve, which is like his love, the God makes himself the equal of the humblest, let no innkeeper or professor of philosophy imagine that he is a shrewd enough fellow to detect anything, unless the God gives the condition. And when the God in the form of a servant stretches forth the hand of omnipotence, let no astonished and open-mouthed beholder imagine that he is a disciple because he is astonished, and because he can gather others about him who in their turn are astonished over his story. If there is no necessity for the God to give the condition, the learner knew from the beginning how it is with the God, even if he did not know that he knew it; the other is not even the Socratic thought, but infinitely lower.

But the outward figure (we do not mean its detail) is not a matter of indifference to the disciple. It is what he has seen and his hands have handled. However, the outward figure is not important in the sense that he would cease to be a believer if he happened to meet the Teacher some day on the street and did not at once recognize him or even walked some distance with him on the way without realizing that it was

[1] Every determination of his nature which makes the God immediately knowable is indeed a milestone on the way of approximation, but one which marks an increase instead of a decrease in the distance; it does not measure toward the Paradox but away from it, back past Socrates and the Socratic ignorance. This needs to be carefully noted, lest one experience in the world of the spirit what befell the traveller who asked if the road on which he was journeying went to London, and was told by the Englishman that it did; in spite of which he failed to reach London, because the Englishman had omitted to mention that he needed to turn about, since he was proceeding in the opposite direction.

he. The God gave to the disciple the condition that enables him to see him, opening for him the eyes of Faith. But it was a terrible thing to see this outward figure, to have converse with him as with one of us, and every moment that Faith was not present to see only the servant-form. When the Teacher is gone from the disciple in death, memory may bring his figure before him; but it is not on this account that the disciple believes, but because he received the condition from the God, and hence is enabled again to see, in memory's trustworthy image, the person of the God. So it is with the disciple, who knows that he would have seen nothing without the condition, since the first thing he learned to understand was that he was in Error.

But in that case is not Faith as paradoxical as the Paradox? Precisely so; how else could it have the Paradox for its object, and be happy in its relation to the Paradox? Faith is itself a miracle, and all that holds true of the Paradox also holds true of Faith. But within the framework of this miracle everything is again Socratic, yet so that the miracle is never cancelled—the miracle namely, that the eternal condition is given in time. Everything is Socratic; the relation between one contemporary and another in so far as both are believers is entirely Socratic: the one owes the other nothing, but both owe everything to God.

I think I hear someone say: "Then it seems that the contemporary derives absolutely no advantage from his contemporaneity; and yet if we assume what you have assumed about God's appearance among men, it lies so near at hand to count the contemporary generation blessed, because it saw and heard."—"Aye, truly it lies near at hand; so near I think, that this generation has doubtless also counted itself blessed. Shall we assume that this was the case? For otherwise it was surely not happy, and our praise of this generation is merely an expression for the fact that by acting differently under the same circumstances, one might have become happy. But if this is the case, our praise may need to be qualified in a variety of ways, when we consider the matter more carefully, and may in the last analysis become altogether ambiguous. Suppose, as we sometimes read in old chronicles, that an emperor celebrated his marriage for an entire week with festivities the like of which had never before been seen, every breath of air being scented with perfume, while the ear found it constantly vibrant with music and song, so as to enhance the enjoyment of the costliest viands, set forth in richest abundance. Day and night the festivities continued, for the night was made as bright as the day by torches that illumined the scene—but whether seen by the light of day or by the illumination of the night, the queen was more beautiful and more gracious than any mortal woman; and the whole was an enchantment, wonderful as

the most audacious desire in its still more audacious fulfilment. Let us assume that all this had happened in the past, and that we had to be content with the meager and fasting report of what had taken place—why should we not, humanly speaking, count the contemporaries happy? That is to say those contemporaries who saw and heard and grasped with their hands; for otherwise of what avail would it be to be contemporary? The splendors of the imperial marriage-feast and the rich abundance of its pleasures were directly accessible to sight and touch, so that anyone who was a contemporary in the stricter sense would presumably have feasted his eyes and made his heart to be glad. But suppose the splendor had been of a different kind, not immediately apparent to the senses, what profit would there then be in being a contemporary, since one would not on that account necessarily be contemporary with the splendor? Such a contemporary could scarcely be counted happy, nor could we bless his eyes and ears; for he was not contemporary with the splendor, neither hearing nor seeing anything of it. And this not because he lacked time and opportunity (in the immediate sense), but because of something else, which could be lacking even if he himself had been present, and favored with opportunities for seeing and hearing to the fullest extent, and had not permitted these opportunities (in the immediate sense) to go unused. But what does it mean thus to say that one can be a contemporary without being contemporary, that one may be a contemporary and though utilizing this advantage (in the immediate sense) yet be a non-contemporary—what does this mean except that it is quite impossible to be an immediate contemporary of such a Teacher and of such an event; so that the real contemporary is not the real contemporary by virtue of an immediate contemporaneity, but by virtue of something else? A contemporary may for all that be a non-contemporary; the real contemporary is such not by virtue of his immediate contemporaneity; *ergo*, it must also be possible for a non-contemporary (in the immediate sense) to be a contemporary, by virtue of that something which makes the contemporary a real contemporary. But the non-contemporary (in the immediate sense) is of course the member of a later generation, whence it must be possible for an individual so situated to be a real contemporary. Or what do we mean by being contemporary? Is it perhaps this kind of a contemporary that we praise, one who can speak as follows: 'I ate and drank in his presence, and he taught in our streets. I saw him often, and knew him for a common man of humble origin. Only a very few thought to find something extraordinary in him; as far as I am concerned, I could see nothing remarkable about him, and I was certainly as much of a contemporary as anybody.' Or is this what we mean by calling anyone a contemporary, and is he a contemporary to whom the God must

say if they meet in another life, and he seeks to urge his contemporaneity: 'I do not know you'? And so it was in truth, just as it was equally true that such a contemporary could not have known the Teacher. Only the believer, i.e., the non-immediate contemporary, knows the Teacher, since he receives the condition from him, and therefore knows him even as he is known."—"Stop there a moment, I beg you; for if you keep on talking in this fashion I will not be able to get in a single word. You talk like a disputant for the doctorate, or better still, you talk like a book; and what is worse for you, you talk like a very particular book. For here again, whether wittingly or unwittingly, you have introduced some words into the discourse which are not your own, nor by you placed in the mouths of the speakers. The words are very well known, except that you have substituted the singular for the plural. Here are the scripture passages (for the words are taken from the Bible): 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets'; 'I tell ye, I know not whence ye are.' However, let this pass without further comment for the present. But are you not drawing too sweeping a conclusion when you infer from the Teacher's reply to a given individual, 'I do not know you,' that this individual was not a contemporary and had not known the Teacher? If the emperor of whom you spoke had said to one who claimed contemporaneity with his splendid marriage-feast, 'I do not know you,' would the emperor thereby have proved that he was not a contemporary?"—"By no means would the emperor have proved such a thing; he would at the most have proved himself a fool, not content like Mithridates to know the name of every soldier in his army, but pretending to know every contemporary, and assuming to decide by this knowledge whether any given individual had been contemporary or not. The emperor was immediately knowable, and hence someone may very well have known the emperor, even if the emperor did not know him. But the Teacher of our hypothesis was not immediately knowable; he could be known only when he himself gave the condition. Whoever received the condition received it from the Teacher himself, and hence the Teacher must know everyone who knows him, and no one can know the Teacher except through being known by him. Are we not agreed on this point, and do you perhaps at once perceive the remoter consequences of what we have been saying? When the believer is the believer and knows the God through having received the condition from the God himself, every successor must receive the condition from the God himself in precisely the same sense, and cannot receive it at second hand; for if he did, this second hand would have to be the hand of the God himself, and in that case there is no question of a second hand. But a successor who receives the condition from the God himself is a contemporary, a real contemporary; a privilege enjoyed only

by the believer, but also enjoyed by every believer."—"Indeed, now that you have pointed it out I clearly perceive the truth of this, and I already descry the far-reaching consequences. I am only surprised that I had not discovered it for myself, and I would give a great deal for the honor of having been the discoverer."—"And I would give still more if I could be sure that I had fully understood it; this concerns me far more than who discovered it. But I have not yet entirely understood it, as I shall show you presently in a later chapter, at which time I will rely on your assistance, you who have at once understood the whole. But with your permission I shall now submit what the lawyers call a brief, summarizing what I have expounded and understood up to the present time. And as I present this brief I ask you to look to your rights and to assert them; for I hereby summon you *sub poena praeclusi et perpetui silentii* [under punishment determined beforehand and carried out in silence]. The immediate contemporaneity can serve only as an occasion. (a) It can serve as occasion for the acquirement of historical knowledge. In this respect a contemporary of the emperor's marriage-feast is far more fortunately situated than a contemporary of the Teacher; for the latter merely gets an opportunity to see the servant-form, and at most one or another mysterious deed, in relation to which he must remain uncertain whether to admire or to resent being made a fool of, since he will presumably not even wish to persuade the Teacher to do it over again, as a juggler does, in order to give the spectators a better opportunity to see how the trick is turned. (b) It may serve as an occasion for the contemporary to acquire a Socratic deepening of his self-knowledge, in which case the contemporary vanishes as nothing in comparison with the Eternal which he discovers within himself. (c) Finally (and this is our assumption, lest we be thrown back on Socrates), it may serve as an occasion by means of which the contemporary, as one who is in Error, receives the condition from the God, and so beholds his glory with the eyes of faith. Aye, happy such a contemporary! But such a contemporary is not in the immediate sense an eye-witness; he is contemporary as a believer, in the autopsy of Faith. But in this autopsy every non-contemporary (in the immediate sense) becomes a contemporary. If then some member of a later generation, perhaps even moved by his own romanticism, yearns to be a contemporary in the immediate sense, he only proves himself a pretender, recognizable like the false Smerdes by the absence of ears—the ears of faith namely, though he may have asses' ears long enough to permit even a contemporary (in the immediate sense) to hear himself into being a non-contemporary. If such a man continues to romance about how splendid it is to be a contemporary (in the immediate sense) betraying a restless eagerness to be up and away, he must doubtless be

allowed to go; but if you watch him you will readily see, both from the nature of his movements and the direction he takes, that he goes not to meet the Paradox with its awe and fear, but rather trips off like a dancing-master to be in time for the emperor's nuptials. And though he gives his expedition a sacred name, preaching fellowship for others so that they join the pilgrimage in crowds, he will none the less scarcely discover the holy land (in the immediate sense), since it is not to be found either on the map or on the earth; his journey is a jest, like the children's game of seeing somebody to 'grandmother's door.' And though he may give himself no rest, but runs faster than a horse can trot or a man can lie, he runs only with the lime-rod, misunderstanding himself as bird-catcher; for if the birds do not come to him of their own accord, it will certainly not help to run after them.—In only one respect could I be tempted to count a contemporary (in the immediate sense) more fortunate than the member of some later generation. For if we assume that centuries intervene between this event and the period of a succeeding generation there will presumably have accumulated much gossip about this thing, so much foolish chatter that the untrue and confusing rumors with which the contemporary (in the immediate sense) had to contend, did not prove nearly so serious an obstacle to the realization of a right relationship. And that so much the more, since the echo of the centuries, like the echo in some of our churches, would not only have tended to surround Faith with noisy chatter, but might even have transformed Faith itself into chatter; which could not very well have happened in the first generation, when faith must have revealed itself in all its pristine vigor, through the contrast easily distinguishable from everything else."

Not only the content but the mood of Kierkegaard's existentialism has been important for modern Christian thought. Few major Christian writers of this century have been untouched by his powerful contribution. It has become axiomatic, indeed, that faith can have no direct tie to history. The movements fathered by Bultmann and Barth have both tended to assume this—one retaining the language of paradox and decision, the other setting forth the sovereignty of divine grace.

A longer view may find that the existentialist position is itself mainly another attempt to handle the faith-fact issue largely in the terms posed by Lessing. Where it is so formulated, the tendency is to try to preserve for faith some kind of separate self-identity or autonomy—if not invulnerability—as a way of dealing with the embarrassment of its close tie to the fluctuating stream of history as we know it. "This is what we believe. In this—and this—and this we are both safe and dependably holy," people seem to want to say in effect.

Kierkegaard is discerning enough to see that any such combination of self-identity and flux is highly contradictory, and this insight provides him with a way of defining faith's self-identity in relation to historical change. For faith is given precisely in the midst of the passionate commitment of self to an objective uncertainty. Were God to disclose himself in any other way than through his incarnate but hidden existence in Jesus, who died on a cross, faith could have no integrity at all. By just such openness in the circumstances is man given the freedom to believe or disbelieve.

6. Faith and Fact in Ritschl and Harnack

We pause again to speak of two other theologians whose writings we cannot consider in detail. The first of these is *Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89)**. Schleiermacher viewed Christianity as monotheistic, prophetic, and oriented around the redemption accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth. For Ritschl, however, this outlook did not sufficiently emphasize the relation between redemption through Christ (as the "means") and the kingdom of God (the "end"). The Christian life, he thought, has a double character, perfectly religious and perfectly ethical. On the one hand it involves spiritual redemption, "that freedom from guilt and over the world which is to be won through a realized Fatherhood of God." On the other, it involves "moral organization of humanity through love-prompted action."

> Christianity, then, is the monotheistic, completely spiritual, and ethical religion, which, based on the life of its author as Redeemer and as Founder of the Kingdom of God, consists in the freedom of the children of God, involves the impulse to conduct from the motive of love, which aims at the moral organization of mankind, and grounds a blessedness on the relationship of sonship to God, as well as on the Kingdom of God.[1]

Ritschl's way of dealing with history and faith is in terms of the distinction and interrelation between the Jesus of *fact* and the Christ of *value*.[2] Like Lessing and others before him, he is clear that it is one thing to speak of Jesus as an historical figure and another to affirm that he is the Son of God. Historical phenomena do not wear the mark of their spiritual reality on their sleeve. A disinterested, scientific type of knowledge has its validity, but also its limitations; it is restricted to surface meanings. Reality in depth is perceived in terms of value or worth —of pleasure or pain associated with the mixture of man's dominion over the world and subordination to it.

There is never any doubt about Ritschl's intention to start with Jesus as an historical phenomenon. A preconceived notion of God will not suffice. The emphasis is upon Jesus of Nazareth and the value relation

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* *Born in Berlin. Attended the universities of Bonn, Halle, Berlin, Heidelberg, and Tübingen. Taught chiefly at Göttingen, in the field of systematic theology. Often credited with giving impetus to the "social gospel" movement of this century. Placed central emphasis upon active love in obedience to the goal of the kingdom of God. Included in his writings is an influential three-volume work entitled* The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation. *Stressed the worth of man over against nature in the face of a rising scientific approach to all of life.*

[1] *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, H. R. Mackintosh, trans., and A. B. Macaulay, ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 15.

[2] See *ibid.*, chap. IV, sec. 28 for Ritschl's distinction between "fact" and "value" judgments.

he sets up in the community of those whose memories are shaped by the story of his perfect obedience, sonship, and dominion over the world. Jesus differs from other mere points on the time-space continuum accessible to the neutral observer. This is by the faith awareness that through him man is a creature of worth. Through him man shares in the trust and love, the freedom from the world and for the neighbor, and the divine forgiveness, that mark Jesus' own obedience as man's representative before God.

The Jesus of fact and the Christ of value are not simply set side by side in this approach. Yet it is not always clear just what faith takes hold of, in dealing with Christ's *worth* for us in the work of redemption. Ritschl seems to mean that the Jesus of fact *is* the Christ of value, even though known only through that value context. But the distinction was to haunt subsequent discussions. For at least some of Ritschl's successors, as with those engaged in the "quest for the historical Jesus," the result was a bypassing of value for fact. The aim was to drop anchor directly and securely in fact—somewhere, discovered somehow *behind* all the faith interpretations, personal judgments, and ethical commitments.

*Adolf Harnack (1851–1889).** This well-known scholar engages in a search for the "essence" of Christianity. This he sees as something to be approached through commitment within the historical community of faith, and not through apologetic argument or speculatively, in terms of discussion of religion in general. By contrast with Schleiermacher, the movement here is from the concrete expression of Christianity to religion in general rather than the reverse.

Christianity in its essence is something "simple and sublime."[3] It entails a never-ending revolution: getting rid of formulas, correcting expectations, changing and developing ways of feeling, through focus upon Jesus Christ and his gospel. The "gospel in the Gospels" is something so direct, it speaks with such living power, that it cannot easily be mistaken. As a dynamic essence it abides in various cultural forms.

Strauss, we remember, insisted that the literal and rationalistic versions of faith intermingle with the mythical. Harnack, inversely, argues that the Gospels, in spite of mythical and miraculous elements, offer a plain picture of Jesus' teaching. He believes that they show clearly how his life ended in fulfillment of his vocation, and the character of his in-

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* *German writer and highly influential historian of Christian thought. Son of a professor, he held teaching posts at Leipzig, Giessen, Marburg, and Berlin. An immensely productive scholar. His works include a seven-volume* History of Dogma, *by which he hoped to free the living gospel from foreign accretions of Greek philosophy and dogmatic abstractions of all types.*

[3] See Harnack's *What Is Christianity?*, Thomas Bailey Saunders, trans. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), especially pp. 1–74.

fluence on his followers. In this Harnack stands in contrast to Schweitzer. The latter's search for the inner reality of Christianity led him to the view of apocalyptic teacher, mistaken in his expectations and so much conditioned by his period as to make him of doubtful relevance to the modern age. But Harnack is sure that an historical approach to the Gospels, rightly pursued, will result in a portrait of Jesus in his universal and very contemporary power.

It would be a caricature to suggest that this thinker's "essence" is merely a series of abstract propositions. For Harnack a living relationship, described in organic terms, abides in the midst of change. He himself is too committed to Christianity as a matter of "life" to be content with static definitions of what is essential.[4] Yet within the limits of language, the way this living relation seems to take form for him is in terms of such teachings as the kingdom of God and its coming, God the Father and the infinite value of the soul, the higher righteousness and the commandment of love.

The stress is on Jesus of Nazareth and the life of humility and love he carries out. It is almost as though Lessing's big ditch had faded into unimportance. Harnack at any rate is less disturbed by the inadequacy of the accidents of history to bear universal meaning than by the unlikelihood of rational principles taking on flesh and blood. Not history, he thinks, but man's generalized abstractions are the real threat to a vigorous Christianity. Nor does faith need so urgently to be shielded from concrete fact. When allowed to speak through secondary formulas and dogmas, history enlivens and supports faith.

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

7. Wilhelm Herrmann

1846-1922

Systematic theologian. Born in Melkow, Brandenburg. Studied and became Privatdozent *at University of Halle, and in 1879 professor at University of Marburg, of whose theological "school" he is a respected figure. Influenced by Kant and Ritschl, he used their ideas with independence and originality. Argued for the validity of faith in distinction from science. Defined faith as complete confidence and surrender due to Christ, in whom we have communion with God. Believed in function of historical criticism in clearing away illusory hindrances to faith. Held faith to be ultimately a personal encounter that goes beyond historical fact. Teacher of both Bultmann and Barth (now known as "friendly enemies" in outlook), whose works clearly reveal his fertile influence.*

"What others say to us about God helps us only if it leads us to understand what is given to us in our own experiences. That service other men can and must do for us."

It is clear that Wilhelm Herrmann stands in a tradition which both precedes and follows him, notably in the work of Ritschl and Harnack. Herrmann speaks repeatedly of "personal Christianity" and the soul's communion with God. He says that "herein is really included all that belongs to the characteristic life of Christendom—revelation and faith, conversion and the comfort of forgiveness, the joy of faith and the service of love, lonely communion with God and life in Christian fellowship."[1]

This thinker shares the Christological focus and communal orientation found especially in Schleiermacher. Communion with God is achieved through the mediation of Christ to each Christian. Thus faith lives in the closest possible relation to the historical Jesus, yet without concern for time-conditioned details of tradition. In this Herrmann sets himself against the traditionalists, those who believe in authoritative dogmas more than the living person. He differs equally from the pure rationalists, those who rely neither on authority nor on any historical event, but on an inner principle in man—a given condition somehow basically independent of the "accidents" of time.

The important works of Herrmann in English are Systematic Theology *(New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927) and* The Communion of the Christian with God *(New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906).*

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[1] Wilhelm Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1906), p. 9.

In the following selection Herrmann begins by noting that history is an element of the concrete reality in which we live. We are part of history as well as nature, and "it is only out of life history that God can come to meet us." How we move from historical awareness to a living awareness of Christ in our own sphere of reality is sensitively traced by the writer. He indicates the various means of becoming acquainted with Jesus' inner life and power, and the communion with God that follows. Our willingness to surrender to the reality and compelling power of this spiritual life "is the real test question of faith."

Thus we find in Herrmann the frequent statement that what the Christian is mainly concerned with is the "picture of Jesus' inner life." This implies the kind of personal disclosure that comes through—but is never fully expressed by—objective events and details. In ordinary life, in the free disclosure of one living self to another, there is an unshakable assurance of personal presence, meaning, and influence. This for Herrmann is part of our general experience with other human beings. We feel it in spite of the diverse circumstances through which it comes. Various people, or one person at different times, may become aware of the "real person" in an individual through quite different outward conditions or events. The setting and details do not have to be the same. We perceive the "real person" in many ways. So with our knowledge of the essential Jesus. It comes through to us, despite the wavering and shifting of external historical perspectives. For anyone who is touched by his inner being, Jesus becomes an effective power and an assured fact.

This relationship with Jesus does not come about automatically. It requires more than mere familiarity with the Bible or a secondhand knowledge of the details of his life, from whatever angle. Herrmann is as convinced as Lessing that no adequate basis for faith can be found in the vagaries of historical judgment. But the true, inner, personal life of Jesus is disclosed to man in God's own time for each person. Elements of preparation in a person for this "hearing of the gospel" include: the witness of others who have experienced the living presence, sensitiveness to our own basic religious need, and the highest moral efforts of which we are capable. A faith-relationship with the inner life of Jesus comes alive most predictably when we hear his story in the midst of an outward life of vigorous moral activity. It helps to be concerned with the highest possible values.

Because faith has in some sense an invulnerable basis in living experience, the Christian is safe in being completely open to historical biblical criticism at the level of more outward details. Herrmann assumes two more or less parallel modes of historical awareness and approach. One is scientific, abstractive, external, putting aside questions of mean-

ing in favor of a neutral description of events. The other is empathetic and participating, with issues of value and personal significance at stake. Herrmann is unwilling to let either mode absorb the other. Scientific investigations into the Jesus of history are important, he believes, since they destroy false assumptions as to the dependence of faith upon history. Faith is thus freed to be genuine faith. And they do provide recurrent comparisons between the "inner portrait of Jesus" (as the foundation of faith) and such shifting details as can be ascertained by research. This is a wholesome reminder that our inner experience of Christ must be seized afresh each day.

Herrmann insists that faith is not dependent on the external consciousness of the scientific historiographer. Its basis is far more immutably secure. The difference between *Jesus as a fact* (subject to changing historical judgments and assessments) and *Jesus as a personally assured or saving fact* lies in a person's fundamental relation to his inner life.[2]

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[2] Here a reference to Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) is in order. Where Troeltsch addresses Herrmann in critical dialog is precisely on the notion of an "inner fact relation" which is somehow invulnerable to historical and critical analysis. See Troeltsch's *Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1911), especially p. 20. As this writer puts it, to speak of fact which presupposes an element of faith is simply nonsense to anyone trained and sophisticated in modern methods of historiography. Rejecting dogmatics as depending on acceptance of a transhistorical, unchangeable truth, he argues for the *cultic* significance of the historical Jesus. The concrete factualness of Jesus is essential to the vital power and propagation of the gospel. But this does not imply a dogma tied in with some special quality of redemption, or a piety that springs from the inner being of man, in direct connection with the inner life of Jesus. The meaning of Jesus for faith derives strictly from "social-psychological laws." The ordinary factuality of Jesus is not to be obscured by such circumlocutions as "a fact that is established not as other facts, but in faith."

Clearly Troeltsch is pointing ahead to a faith style marked by openness to radically matter-of-fact historicity. Faith requires no invulnerability from beyond, as against the ordinary factualness of Jesus. His very meaning for the life of faith is open to social-psychological analysis. Nor is his involvement in the flux and change of the historical process any real embarrassment to faith. What is far more shocking is the way faith tries to hide from the implications of historicity, by taking refuge either in timeless dogmatism or some kind of specialized piety.

Promising as these leads are, Troeltsch is hardly prepared to follow through with consistency and vigor in the ramifications of his historicist insights. He has an ambivalence of his own in the matter of invulnerability of faith. To some degree, he seems to perpetuate a Kantian type of religious a priori—from the side of the personal subject, at any rate. He is not prepared to admit the radical historicity of personal as well as objective or social morality (see below, chap. 9, pp. 226–244). Nor is he sufficiently aware of the simple truth that faith does not spring directly from fact. This the historical-critical studies of Scripture were, in his day, already beginning to make clear. There is no substitute invulnerability to be gained for

Though conveyed through tradition and the community, this basic value-relation has its own kind of immediacy. The varying judgments of historical scholarship cannot disturb its inner certitude or violate its identity.

In 1886 Herrmann first published *The Communion of the Christian with God,* which became a classic also in the English-speaking theological tradition, adding to the reputation that made Marburg a place of pilgrimage because Herrmann taught there. Those who heard him said that even in his lectures there was a deeply moving evangelical and prophetic tone. Our selection consists of sections 4–8 from Chapter II of this well-known work, entitled, "The Establishment of Our Communion with God Through the Revelation of God."

(From Wilhelm Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God,* J. Sandys Stanyon, trans., and R. W. Stewart, ed. [4th ed.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons and London: Williams & Norgate, 1906], chap. II, §§ 4–8, pp. 64–84. Footnotes are the writer's.)

§4. THE PERSON OF JESUS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE SPHERE OF REALITY WHICH WE CAN REFLECT UPON.

If we wish to come to God, we must not, above all things, turn our back upon the actual relationships in which we stand. The concrete reality amid which we actually live must be the nourishment of our inner life. When we take this reality to heart, then God enters our life. For the earth is the Lord's. Dreams which soar away from reality lead not to God but to nothing. They are a form of original sin, a form of untruth in which we spin a web of emptiness about ourselves, and so cut ourselves off from true life.

That is the right in the efforts that have cost honest thinkers so much toil, as they have tried to discover for human reason the activity of the Creator in the reality of nature. Those attempts belong, however, to a period of Christian life that has now been outlived. We do not apprehend ourselves as what we really are when we conceive ourselves as part of nature, for we have become conscious that our realm of life is

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faith, either through social-psychological analysis of the fact of Jesus or through the scientific procedure of historical study. Moreover, Troeltsch is too prejudiced against dogmatics and systematic theology to articulate clearly any style of faith thinking (our own term for dogmatics or systematic theology) that acknowledges its total derivation from historical fact. He is more concerned to free current thinking from dogmatic abstractions than to develop any constructive substitute for them.

It is the latter task that increasingly comes to the fore in modern Christian thought.

human society and its history. Nature alone cannot show us all the reality in which we stand. She belongs to that reality, being herself a means to the existence of society; but it is in this society itself, this historical life, of which nature is thus a subordinate part and means, that we first reach the true reality, of which we must become conscious if our inner life is to have any content at all. For this reason we can no longer hope to find God by seeking Him in nature. God is hidden from us in nature because we do not find our whole selves there, we do not find there the full riches of that reality, which crowds in upon our consciousness. It is only out of life in history that God can come to meet us. In proportion as what is essential in our historical environment becomes an element of our consciousness we are led into the presence of those facts which can reveal God to us. If our souls do not awake to a clear consciousness of these facts, if we simply endure our relationship to other men, instead of living it, then the personality within us to which God desires to reveal Himself remains dormant, and we do not see the facts through which alone God can reveal Himself to us.

In that historical environment which ought to give our personal life its fulness, there is no fact more important for each individual than Jesus Christ. To overlook Him is to deceive ourselves as to the best treasure which our own life possesses. For He is precisely that fact which can make us certain, as no other fact can, that God communes with us. This assertion will no doubt give to many the impression of a manifest exaggeration. All who are accustomed to follow the orthodox method of teaching will esteem it such, but so, too, will those who think along rationalistic lines. The former think they find the support of their religious life in doctrines concerning God and Christ which are vouched for by others; the latter wish to found their inward peace neither upon authorities nor upon past events in history, but upon that eternal truth which they grasp in their own thinking here and now. Both classes must find a stumbling-block in our proposition that the person of Jesus is the fact by which God communes with us. Both are inclined to imagine that the communion of God with us is an inward experience into which external facts do not intrude. The objections they raise against our proposition are, *first,* that the person of Jesus is a fact vouched for by authorities, and, *secondly,* that it is a thing of the past. They hold that the first objection forbids us to say that, strictly speaking, *Jesus Himself* is an element of the reality in which we stand; they hold that such can be said only of the *tradition concerning Jesus.* They contend that the second objection above forbids us to say that God communes with us by this fact, i.e., the person of Jesus, because this fact is a thing of the past, whereas God's communion with us must be a thing of the present.

This latter contention has been specially emphasised by Luthardt;[1] but it is evident that it will also be raised by every devout rationalist and mystic.

§5. IT IS NOT THROUGH A HISTORICAL JUDGMENT THAT THE PERSON OF JESUS BECOMES A FACT WE OURSELVES ESTABLISH.

The former contention has the greater weight. Men must indeed be powerfully moved by the supposition that Jesus Himself cannot be held to be an undeniable element in our actual environment, and that it is only the story of Jesus, as vouched for by others, that can be called such an element. Many within the Christian fellowship find this supposition to be a very slave-chain, and for many outside that fellowship it is a drag holding them back from entering. But are the chains as adamantine as they seem? If not, then we, too, can overcome a serious hindrance which the faith of the Reformers reached beyond, but from which they could not get free.

It is true that we should have no certain knowledge of Jesus if the New Testament did not tell us about him. Narratives by others contribute in all cases not a little to the picture we form for ourselves of historical reality. If tradition of some sort did not show us what others have experienced of human life we should lack the most valuable of the interchanges of spiritual possessions. But given this exchange, then the narrative which comes to us, either by word of mouth or in writing, is not the only fact which we incorporate into our picture of historical reality; the content of those narratives may also become a fact for us. This happens only when we can ourselves establish its reality, and we may do this in various ways.

The most elementary form of doing so consists in extending the confidence we place in the trustworthiness of the narrator to that which he narrates. This constantly happens in our daily life, whenever we base our plans of action upon information given by others. We are guided by the content of their report just as by a reality we have grasped for ourselves. But it does not occur to us to offer ourselves as witnesses that things are really as they are said to be. Hence we can remain in this attitude only so long as we are concerned with matters of minor importance. But as soon as the contents of the information affect seriously the most important interests of life, our trust in the mental power and

[1] See my treatise on "The Certainty of Faith and the Freedom of Theology." Second edition, 1889, p. 75. Luthardt says, against the inclusion of the past in the present religious experience, "How can what is preterite be what is present?"

moral goodness of the narrator no longer suffices to assure us that what he reports is a fact beyond all doubt. If even in such a case we are compelled to take action in reliance on the report, our action takes the character of a venture. We are often obliged to act thus when the pressure of necessity does not permit of inaction; under such compulsion we may find ourselves obliged to treat the contents of the narrative as fact. But it is obvious that no such compulsion exists when the information received in any way concerns our religious faith. If we do put confidence in the trustworthiness of a narrator, and are thus led to receive his narration as a fact among the subjects of our religious thought, then, whether the confidence be really felt or be only arbitrarily assumed, it is always very certain that the matter reported is nothing that affects the vital interests of religion. This may be clearly seen in Roman Catholicism. The historical appearance of Jesus is there really accepted on the authority of the narrators, and so we find that that appearance has nothing to do with the highest concern of religious life, namely, how a man is to find God. It serves as a stimulus to the imagination, as an example and as a symbol, but it is not to the Roman Catholic the great fact in which he sees God entering into his own life and revealing Himself to him. Whenever we find the proclamation of the appearance of Jesus thus based entirely on the authority of the narrators, it will also be observed that the Person of Jesus is put on one side so soon as the deepest religious interest comes forward for consideration. A believer cannot base his very existence entirely on what may be given him by other men.

Our mental activity in the matter of receiving reports is certainly greater when we do not form our conception of the actual event from the narrative alone, but seek to obtain it by a combination of the narrative with something else which we know to be real. This procedure is frequently exemplified in daily life, and it has been developed into an art in historical criticism. The contents of the narrative are viewed in the light of the evident character of the narrator as seen through his writings, the position he occupied and its impress on him, and the culture of his age which influenced his way of looking at things. From a consideration of these circumstances we decide how far the contents of the story may be incorporated into our picture of what actually happened. But the decision thus reached of necessity lays claim to nothing more than probability. We are always prepared to modify our results upon more exact examination of the narrative or upon the discovery of new information. It is obvious, then, that such decisions do not give us facts on which our religious faith could be based. Hence it is quite explicable why historical criticism of the sacred records is so much dis-

liked in many quarters. If men will imagine that the reliability of the sacred records is the proper ground of religious faith, then they must necessarily be rendered in the highest degree uneasy by faithful attempts to estimate the historical probability of what is narrated in those records. We have no such anxiety; on the contrary, we declare that the historical appearance of Jesus, in so far as it is drawn into the sphere of this attempt to establish the probable truth, cannot be a basis of faith. It is only a part of that world with which faith is to wrestle.

At this point, of course, the question arises whether we can maintain our position that the historical Christ has become for us the absolutely convincing ground of our faith in God. For how is it at all possible to lift out of the mist of probability the content of a tradition that is subject to historical criticism?

It may be said that we learn with certainty that at least Jesus lived, from the fact of the existence of His church and its historical significance, and that just as little can we question the correctness of certain features in that portrait of Jesus which his followers have preserved in the records of the New Testament. From the standpoint of the mere historian this is certainly the case. A historian may doubt much that the New Testament tells us concerning the glory of Jesus. Because it is possible to attribute it in some measure to the transfiguring enthusiasm of His disciples, it is open to the suspicion of exaggeration. But, on the other hand, the correctness of His portrait in its other features must be admitted by every one who is not prepared to adopt the absurd supposition that in the case of a man who has exerted the greatest influence on history all traces of His earthly life have disappeared. On the strength of those elements in Jesus which, beyond all doubt, are with us to-day, every reasonable man will hold the more general features of the common story of His life to be correct. Now, one might in theory hold the opinion that we have only succeeded in establishing the probability of those facts concerning Jesus; none the less in practice, even if our interests in Jesus be only historical, we do all include His picture with its well-known features as a part of the historical reality amid which we live, and here we are evidently in no way dependent upon the authority of the chroniclers who give us those features of the life of Jesus. On the contrary, the decision which we reach that these things are facts, proceeds from our own independent activity, and is based upon that which we regard as real at present exactly as the decisions of historical criticism are. It is thus perfectly clear that we are quite in a position to detach the content of a narrative both from the narrative itself and from its author, and to regard it as an element of the reality to which we have to adjust our lives.

§6. THE PERSONALITY OF JESUS BY ITS OWN POWER MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO GRASP IT AS AN ELEMENT OF OUR OWN SPHERE OF REALITY.

Yet this helps us little. The historian may succeed thus in removing doubts as to the historical reality of some person long since dead; but if he seeks to base his faith in God upon this, his argument collapses immediately. Once again a doubt lifts its head, one which perhaps can have no meaning for the mere historian. There comes back the feeling that it is a fatal drawback that no historical judgment, however certain it may appear, ever attains anything more than probability. But what sort of a religion would that be which accepted a basis for its convictions with the consciousness that it was only probably safe? For this reason it is impossible to attach religious conviction to a mere historical decision. Here Lessing is right. If, notwithstanding all this, the person of Jesus is so certainly a fact to us Christians that we do see in Him the basis of our faith, and the present revelation of God to us, this conviction is not produced by a historical judgment.[2] The calmness with which Christendom holds by the historical reality of Jesus has certainly not been won by the forcible suppression of historical doubt. Any such effort would be made contrary to the dictates of conscience, and it could give no man peace. It is something quite different which removes all doubt from the picture of Jesus; if we have that picture at all, we have it as the result, not of our own efforts, but of the power of Jesus Himself.

In the Christian fellowship we are made acquainted, not merely with the external course of Jesus' lot in life and of His work in history, but we are also led into His presence and receive a picture of His inner life. For this we are certainly dependent, in the first instance, upon other men. For the picture of Jesus' inner life could be preserved only by those who had experienced the emancipating influence of that fact upon themselves. The personality of Jesus remained hidden from all others; it could only reveal itself to such as were lifted by it. Such men were able to understand and to retain the utterances of Jesus which were expressions of his peculiar power. Hence the picture of His inner life could be preserved in His church or "fellowship" alone. But, further, this picture so preserved can be understood only when we meet with men on whom it has wrought its effect. We need communion with Christians in order that, from the picture of Jesus which His church has preserved, there may shine forth that inner life which is the heart of it. It is only when we see its effect that our eyes are opened to its reality so that we thereby

[2] I will abstain from giving the names of all who, nevertheless, say that this is my view. The misrepresentation will go on. For in our Church it is as useful to the rationalists as to the "positives."

experience the same effect. Thus we would never apprehend the most important element in the historical appearance of Jesus did not His people make us feel it. The testimony of the New Testament concerning Jesus arose within His church, and its exposition is the work of the Church, through the life which that Church develops and gains for itself out of this treasure which it possesses. Something similar is the case with every personality; one must stand within the sphere of life which it created or influenced in order to be able to understand its innermost reality. So if we would understand what is most important in history, we must look not only to the records but also to the men whose actual present life expounds those records to us.

What we are thus seeking is certainly the hardest part to grasp in the whole sum of the historical reality of Jesus; nevertheless it is just this which sets us free from the mere record, because it presses in upon us as a power that is present through its work upon us. He who has found the inner life of Jesus through the mediation of others, in so far as he has really found it, has become free even of that mediation. He is so set free by the significance which the inner life of the man Jesus has for him who has beheld it. If we have experienced His power over us, we need no longer look for the testimony of others to enable us to hold fast to His life as a real thing. We start, indeed, from the records, but we do not grasp the fact they bring us until the enrichment of our own inner life makes us aware that we have touched the Living One. This holds true of every historical personality; the inner content of any such personality is laid open only to those who become personally alive to it, and feel themselves aroused by contact with it and see their horizon widened. The picture of a personality becomes visible to us in this way, and cannot be handed over to us by any communication from others; it must arise within ourselves as the free revelation of the living to the living. It is thus, therefore, that the inner life of Jesus becomes part of our own sphere of reality, and the man who has experienced that will certainly no longer say that, strictly speaking, he can know only the story of Jesus as a real thing. Jesus Himself becomes a real power to us when He reveals His inner life to us; a power which we recognize as the best thing our life contains.

Any conscientious reader of the Gospels will be constantly questioning whether the events actually happened as they stand in the narrative. Of course, we can forcibly suppress this doubt, and many a Christian will think it an inevitable necessity to do so. But such suppression will not help him. Help lies for each of us, not in what we make of the story, but in what the contents of the story make of us. And the one thing which the Gospels will give us as an overpowering reality which allows no doubt is just the most tender part of all: it is the inner life of Jesus

itself. Only he who yearns after an honest fulness for his own inner life can perceive the strength and fulness of that soul of Jesus, and whenever we come to see the Person of Jesus, then, under the impress of that inner life that breaks through all the veils of the story, we ask no more questions as to the trustworthiness of the Evangelists. The question whether the portrait of Jesus belongs to history or fiction is silenced in every one who learns to see it at all, for by its help he first learns to see what is the true reality of personal life. We must allow the abstract possibility of the view that the historical portrait of Jesus was constructed in good part by men who were able, like ourselves, to fashion visible symbols of religious and moral ideas, and if we look at it thus we shall feel we are in a superior position, for what we can thus explain does not enrich us, but shows us what we already possess. But we cannot think thus of the total picture of Jesus' inner life, for it compels us to simple reverence.

The man who has had this experience can with heartfelt confidence allow the historical criticism of the New Testament writings to have full play. If such investigation discovers contradictions and imperfections in the story, it also discloses by that very fact the power of the personality of Jesus, for that personality never lets the contradictions and imperfections of the story disfigure the clear features of that which it gave to men, namely, Jesus' own inner life. It is a fatal error to attempt to establish the basis of faith by means of historical investigation. The basis of faith must be something fixed; the results of historical study are continually changing. The basis of our faith must be grasped in the same independent fashion by learned and unlearned, by each for himself. Howsoever the story may come to us, whether as sifted and estimated by historical criticism or not, the same results ought to follow, and may follow, in both cases, namely, that we learn to see in it the inner life of Jesus. Whether faith then arises in us or not depends on whether this personal spirit wins power over us, or we hold ourselves back from Him. Thus in a moral experience there becomes clear to us what it is that can be the basis of our faith. So far as establishing our faith is concerned, historical work on the New Testament can bring us no nearer, and neither by this nor by any other means can we compel any other man to recognise even the bare reality of that which has an effect upon ourselves so powerful as to give us courage to believe in God.

But, nevertheless, historical work on the New Testament is not without value for faith. In the first place, it shows us how small a foundation those writings afford for a historical account under-taking to set forth as the result of scientific processes what the Person of Jesus shall signify for the Christian. In shattering such hopes it destroys certain false props of faith, and that is a great gain. The Christian who imagines that the reliability of the records as historical documents gives cer-

tainty to his faith, is duly startled from his false repose by the work of the historian, which ought to make it clear to such a man that the possession of Christianity cannot be obtained so cheaply as he thinks. Secondly, historical work is constantly constructing afresh, with every possible new modification, whatsoever results can be obtained from the records. By this means the Christian believer is constantly called upon to compare afresh that portrait of Jesus which he carries within him as absolute truth, with the relative truth obtained by historical research. And this helps us not to forget that the most important fact in our life cannot be given to us once for all, but must be continually laid hold of afresh with all our soul. And it helps us also to increasing knowledge of the inexhaustible treasures of the inner life of Christ, and to growing acquaintaince with the ways of His sovereignty over the real world. Of course, we lose this advantage entirely if historical research is made to serve the ends of apologetics instead of remaining true to its own laws. It must make us thankful to feel that we have got beyond the temptation to misuse science in this way. For when we speak of the historical Christ we mean that personal life of Jesus which speaks to us from the New Testament, as the disciples' testimony to their faith, but which, when we perceive it, always comes home to us as a miraculous revelation. That historical research cannot give us this we *know*. But neither will it ever take this from us by any of its discoveries. This we *believe*, the more we experience the influence that this picture of the glory of Jesus has upon us.

§7. THE PECULIARITY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS ROOTED IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THIS FACT IN OUR OWN EXPERIENCE.

It is, therefore, possible for us to apprehend the historical Person of Jesus as an element in that reality which gives its fulness to our life. If we are to become Christians and attain to a real communion with God, it is necessary that we should so apprehend it. To have gained such an apprehension of Jesus by no means implies that we have attained a peculiarly sublime altitude in the Christian life, it is rather the most elementary thing in Christianity. We must experience the personal life of Jesus to be a real force, first of all by the way in which Jesus' disciples behave to us, and then, when we are ripe enough, in the tradition of the New Testament, and then, out of the joy and amazement that such a thing as the personal life really meets us in the world, it becomes possible for the Christian religion to develop. No matter how carefully we may have been trained from our youth up in a well-ordered system of Christian doctrines, that is not Christian religion, for in that case communion with God is not vouchsafed to us, but is a task set for us.

This communion, on which everything depends, is ours only when God Himself so enters into communion with us that we can say to our souls that we mark God's working upon us in undeniable facts, and that we feel His Presence. Clearly this can become ours only through realities which we ourselves perceive to be such; not through that which others have experienced and tell us about, but only through that which we ourselves experience. No one is ever awakened to true religion by allowing himself to be persuaded that religion in the heart must begin with an absolutely unhesitating confidence in narrators. Those men who have entangled others in such a dream will reject it for themselves if they are afterwards awakened. If religion consisted in accepting universal thoughts concerning God and the world which we could never have arrived at for ourselves, then, indeed, it might begin with unconditional confidence in the doctrines and narratives of other men; but if no man can be religious without the consciousness that God communes with him personally, then religion can only be kindled in such an experience in a man's own life as makes upon him the impression that God is thereby communing with him. The nature of the experiences amid which a man becomes conscious of God's working upon himself just where he stands, decides what will be the nature of that man's religion. We, for our part, become conscious of God's communion with us most distinctly by the fact that the Person of Jesus reveals itself to us through the power of His inner life. On this fact alone is based the peculiarity of the Christian religion.

§8. THE SAVING FACT IS THE PERSONAL LIFE OF JESUS WHEN IT IS GRASPED BY US AS A REALITY.

For this reason, always, there is nothing so necessary in Christendom as the preaching of Christ, for to learn to see Him is the way of salvation for a Christian. But we do not help men into that way of salvation if we tell them, on the strength of New Testament narratives and doctrines, that Jesus as the Son of God was born of a virgin; that He taught this and that; that He wrought many miracles and even raised the dead; and that He Himself rose again, and now, having ascended to the Father, rules with almighty power. Such a story is no gospel, be it never so impressively told. These things, received with childlike simplicity, may certainly draw men's attention to Jesus and give them an impulse to seek Him for themselves; but we certainly have not in these statements that Person of Jesus Himself which is able to redeem us. If, therefore, those doctrines and narratives are presented to men as the main thing in which they must believe in order to find the Redeemer, they are certainly deluded. Such statements are a great hindrance to men

today, for the majority can no longer accept these things with childlike simplicity. The most that can happen is that assent may be wrung from them in anxiety for their soul's welfare, and in terror excited by a violent sermon. Then they strain themselves to believe, and yet remain inwardly uncertain. Such strain and uncertainty hinder them from coming to Christ, for only they that are of the truth hear His voice.

It is therefore a matter well worth consideration whether those doctrines and narratives ought not to be used in a different way from what has been customary. They are to be taught as forming part of the witness of the New Testament to Jesus, but not to be set before men with the demand that above all things there must be assent to them. If we do so demand, then we are not preaching the gospel; we are simply proclaiming a law; nor is it even a good law, for to the Pharisee it will be easy and to the upright man intolerable. We ought rather to say to men in preaching: "those men who found the way to God through Jesus did actually believe such marvellous things concerning Him." Let us by all means have this testimony of the disciples earnestly made known; but for this very reason, if we are seeking the same redemption which they found, we are not to take it for granted that everything which influenced the disciples, and affected them as something undoubtedly real to them, must influence us in the same way. If we do expect this, then the very testimony of the disciples will prevent us from seeing that which is to us, in our present position, the accessible and sure basis of salvation. Moreover, we who are seeking redemption in Jesus are by no means to undertake, as if it were quite an easy task for us, to hold the same exalted beliefs about Him which they as redeemed men held. That would be to begin at the top, and to find the basis and ground of redemption in what is really its fruit. We have not to try to clamber up on high all by our own strength, but, like the disciples of old, we are to let ourselves be overpowered and uplifted by something which is real beyond all doubt to ourselves as we are to-day. And what is thus real? We answer, first, the fact that disciples did so speak concerning the power and glory of Jesus. It is a fact that they did testify thus, and this ought to point us to Jesus Himself, and warn us why we are powerless to give such a testimony. But then, secondly, another reality is the inner life of Jesus, which rises up before us from the testimony of the disciples as a real power that is active in the world when He reveals Himself to us by His power. This happens when we see ourselves compelled to recognise this spiritual power as the only thing in the world to which we utterly surrender in reverence and trust. In this experience we lay hold of Jesus Himself as the ground of our salvation. If Jesus Himself is to redeem us we must be placed under His power, and only that which overwhelms us with the force of undoubted reality has power over our inmost life. But the

power to raise us out of our previous nature, that is, a redeeming power, can be found only in something that opposes and transcends the experiences in which we have hitherto been wrapped up.

The only thing of importance is to elevate above everything else that present experience in which we and others feel that the power of Jesus really exercises an inward compulsion upon us and lifts us out of ourselves. Therefore we abandon the thoughtless habit of simply saying to men that they must see the saving facts in things that they can grasp only as the contents of other people's stories. For only something which inwardly transforms him can constitute a saving fact for a man who wishes to rise out of his spiritual weakness. And this effect can be exercised on a person only by something he has himself experienced, and not by something that is merely told him. Therefore, we call the inner life of Jesus the saving fact. For we to-day, just as disciples of every age, can grasp it ourselves as a reality. For in it we ourselves meet the Personal Spirit, who in all that He does to us confirms the claim tradition makes for Him that He is the Saviour of the world. Will we willingly surrender to the spiritual power whose influence we thus perceive to be all around us? Or will we treat this incomparable thing as an every-day matter and in laziness forget it and turn our backs on it? This, at last, is the real test-question of faith. And it passes over immediately into the other question, whether or not we are willing to be sincere.

Whenever the Person of Jesus touches us as a fact that is real to ourselves, then we are hearing the gospel. Not every one, indeed, can see the personal life of Jesus. We see it only when it pleases God to reveal His Son in us, and this can happen to us only when, with minds intent on exercising our moral judgment and satisfying our religious need, we come in contact with the biblical tradition regarding Jesus Christ. But when this revelation does take place, then, under the impression which Jesus makes upon us, there arises in our hearts the certainty that God Himself is turning towards us in this experience. If we now ask: "How is it possible that so mighty an utterance should be spoken to us in the fact that Jesus stands before us, as an undeniable part of what is real to ourselves?" or "How can this fact become for us the intimation wherein God discloses Himself to us in His reality and power?" these questions can be answered only by the fact itself, and by what it undeniably contains. At this point, instead of saying to himself "Believe everything," a man who wants to be saved must rather say: "Believe nothing but what you see yourself to be an insistent fact."

In his presentation Herrmann uses language now somewhat foreign to our world. He sets forth distinctions and makes assumptions as to man's religious sensitivities which are being increasingly challenged. But

his contribution to the story remains. He elaborated themes derived from Kant and Ritschl in a way that shaped the continuing conversation. The parallelism he developed makes room for both faith and fact—theology and science—an interiorized and an externalized history. This has reappeared in the later faith-fact discussion as an attractive option for Christian thought.[3]

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[3] H. Richard Niebuhr has dealt with the relation of faith to history in a way suggesting affinities with the tradition of Herrmann. Niebuhr uses the terms "internal" and "external" history. The distinction is between "history as lived" and "history as observed by an external spectator," which he sees as a restatement of the Chalcedonian paradox. He writes: "We cannot absorb internal history into external history nor yet transcend both practical and objective points of view in such a way as to gain a knowledge of history superior to both and able to unite them into a new whole. If we begin with the spectator's knowledge of events we cannot proceed to the participant's apprehension. There is no continuous movement from an objective inquiry into the life of Jesus to a knowledge of him as the Christ who is Lord. Only a decision of the self, a leap of faith, a *metanoia* or revolution of the mind can lead to participation and from observed to lived history." *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946), p. 83.

This kind of parallelism and distinction appears in more radically historicist forms in Niebuhr than with Herrmann. Precisely because faith is rooted in the plain factuality of Jesus of Nazareth, it needs no protection from the flux and change of cultural development. It should seek no objective or timeless security. It is "confessional" rather than argumentative. To be sure, faith is faith—not mere sight, or conclusions drawn from neutral investigation. But the only certainty faith claims is that of historical selves in community. To these confidence is given that God's presence, power, and purpose as incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth continue to shape life and culture toward His ends.

8. Rudolf Bultmann

1884-

German New Testament scholar and theologian. Studied at universities of Marburg, Tübingen, Berlin. In 1912–21 was Privatdozent *at Marburg, then professor at Breslau and Giessen. During 1921–51, professor of New Testament studies at Marburg. Important theologian of our day. Best known for his work in "demythologizing" the New Testament and debunking the "three-story universe" of old-time religion. Interested in "form criticism" through Weiss and Dibelius. Has carried it to extreme lengths in tracing sources of the Gospels. Enormous influence. Sympathetic to Barth (a fellow student) in some respects; sees clear gulf between history and faith. A modern existentialist under considerable influence from Martin Heidegger.* . .

"I would lead the reader not to any '*view*' of history, but to a highly personal *encounter* with history."

We must note to begin with that Rudolf Bultmann distinguishes between "existential" history, which he calls *geschichtlich,* and external and objective history, which he calls *historisch.* "By *historisch,*" says his translator, "Bultmann means that which can be established by the historian's criticism of the past; by *geschichtlich* he means that which, although occurring in past history, has a vital reference to our life today."[1] In dealing with the faith-fact issue, Bultmann makes use of these terms for two aspects of history which in English are apt to be covered by a single word. Thus he leads the translator, and ourselves after him, to distinguish the two by using the words "historic" (for the inward and vital kind of things) and "historical" (for ordinary recorded history), respectively.

There are clear echoes here of Herrmann's parallelism. Since in this respect Bultmann inherits an earlier tradition, it will be appropriate to sketch also the contribution of *Martin Kähler (1835–1912),* which should

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Included among Bultmann's major writings: Jesus and the Word, Jesus Christ and Mythology, *and* Theology of the New Testament. *The ongoing debate surrounding his program of demythologizing can be traced through these collections:* Kerygma and Myth, *Vol. I, H. W. Bartsch, ed. and Reginald H. Fuller, trans. (London: S.P.C.K., 1953);* The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ, *Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville, trans. and ed. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964).*

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[1] *Kerygma and Myth,* H. W. Bartsch, ed., and Reginald H. Fuller, trans. (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), Vol. 1, Translator's Preface, pp. xi–xii.

not be underestimated.* This biblical scholar wrote when a number of *Lives* of Jesus had been composed in the light of the new biblical criticism. These and the whole "quest of the historical Jesus" were being severely criticized. He saw the effort to arrive at the Jesus of "brute" fact behind the proclamation of the Church as heading into a blind alley. If biblical study had been hampered earlier by rigid dogma, now in Kähler's day it was threatened by equally rigid historicism. Moreover, the Lives then being produced were more in the nature of "Christ novels" than authentic potrayals of the Jesus of the New Testament.

Kähler aimed to be even more radically biblical than the Positivist historians. They were so eager to pin down, each one of them, his particular array of external "fact," as if here the ultimate secret might be found. The focus must be broadened, Kähler felt. Faith does not spring from unadorned fact (whatever its proper place),[2] but from faith as

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* *The classic survey of this whole movement is Albert Schweitzer's* The Quest of the Historical Jesus, *W. Montgomery, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961). Along with his book on* J. S. Bach, *this established Schweitzer's world wide reputation in philosophy, theology, and music. He is especially well known for leaving a brilliant academic career to study medicine and then to establish a mission hospital at Lamberéné in French Equatorial Africa.*

Martin Kähler was born in 1835, the same year that David Friedrich Strauss published his famous Life of Jesus. *Kähler's life was given to the teaching of theology, first in Bonn and then in Halle, Germany. Kähler's important work in the area is* Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus *(Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1896). An English edition is now available:* The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ, *Carl E. Braaten, trans. and ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964).*

[2] Heinrich Ott draws upon Kähler, but claims to correct him by stating that "there are no such things as historical facts at all; rather the very nature of historical reality is to be an appearance, to be a picture." Cf. "The Historical Jesus and the Ontology of History," in Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville, ed. and trans., *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 150. It is true that Kähler does not go as far as Ott in developing an "ontology of history" that rules out "brute fact" by definition. Still, Kähler and Ott are closer together than might appear at first glance. Kähler is quite unwilling to give more than a limited value to the search for the Jesus "behind" faith, which was the drive of much of the scholarship of his day.

Ott argues that "pictures are primary; the facts are a secondary abstraction" *(ibid.*, p. 161). He goes on to say: "Even Jesus of Nazareth at the time of his earthly history, the 'Jesus of History,' was a picture for his disciples and contemporaries, just as each of us is a picture for our fellow men whom we encounter. Thus the real historical Jesus—not the 'so-called historical Jesus'—belongs fundamentally to the same ontological order as the biblical picture of Christ. At the most it is necessary to say in connection with our previous statements that the picture of the historical Jesus and the biblical picture of Christ belong to different levels of phenomenality. The first mentioned picture would then be the chronologically earlier one, which does not necessarily mean that it would be more direct, more unmixed, or more

illumined by Christ and his Spirit. This is the Christ "of the apostolic preaching, of the whole New Testament." The significance of the simple fact of Jesus of Nazareth must be seen within its total context. This includes the recorded testimony of his person and work, the ongoing community of preaching and sacramental life, and the activity of the Spirit. Thus Kähler stresses the "historic, biblical Christ" (*geschichliche, biblische Christus*) as against the "so-called historical Jesus" (*sogenannte historische Jesus*). What he denies is not the factuality of Jesus, but the validity of the contemporary type of positivist historical study. It was not sufficiently critical of its own, often quite unhistorical, bias and presuppositions.

On the other hand Kähler himself displays a certain positivism in his attitude toward faith. According to this thinker, faith springs from faith. Its sureness is focused by various factors in the lives of the the faithful, among which he counts the proclamation, the ethical fruits of faith, the community, and the activity of the Spirit. Kähler's feeling on the faith-fact issue appears in the German phrases in the last paragraph above. We translate these meanings, for convenience, as "historic" (the vital, real life) and "historical" (the external, visible life). This is quite similar to the distinction as noted in Bultmann on p. 118. The contrast carries on into Bultmann with shifting nuances of meaning. The biblical, historic Christ is charged for Kähler with immense significance. It is hard, in fact, to sift out the more neutral, unimportant items supposedly pertaining only to the external Jesus of Nazareth (if such a distinction can indeed be made). But for Kähler it presents no embarrassment, since faith is really anchored in the activity of Christ's own Spirit.

Bultmann's outlook, on the other hand, has a more dualistic and existential tone reminiscent of Kierkegaard. He follows Luther in making a central theme of justification by faith. His terms are somewhat similar to Kähler's, and he maintains the same emphasis on the kerygma, or gospel proclamation. For Bultmann, our relation to Jesus as an objectively historical person is somewhat more dispassionate and neutral. He refuses to eliminate this form of historical consciousness. Yet he does

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faithful and correct. Both pictures, the picture recollecting the earthly days of Jesus and the picture confessing him in faith, are at work in the witness of the Gospel, so much so that the latter one has absorbed and transformed the earlier one. The authors of the New Testament leave us in no doubt as to which of the two 'levels of phenomenality' is normative in this case" (*ibid.*, p. 168 f.).

Ott contends that any ontologically tenable inquiry into the "historic Jesus"—into what "really happened" (that is, the inner, underlying reality)—must take into account these "levels of phenomenality." This is with a view to getting at the depth and background of events rather than "naked facts." How Ott will subsequently develop a "history of Jesus based upon ontology" remains to be seen. Also whether this can be accomplished in a responsibly historical way.

not try to include it in any type of all-embracing faith or knowledge. For him it is a parallel, complementary form of awareness and relationship, with its own role and validity in the life of faith.

But the inert past really comes alive for faith when the relation to Christ is existential. This means for the Christian a personal encounter through the proclamation of the Church and his own response in a highly personal decision and commitment. New Testament imagery, with its mythological elements, has its place not only in describing acts of God but in the understanding it reflects of human existence. It is also important, when illumined by God's Word as proclaimed within the believing community, because of the deep springs of faith it draws upon. Our aim must be to penetrate as deeply as possible into the proclamation of the Church through our own humanity and existential decision. Thus what are otherwise mere past events (Jesus as objectively historical) become present reality with the power to mold our lives (the Christ of existential faith).

"God-language," as the unattractive modern catchword has it, is thus for Bultmann always simultaneously speech about human existence. If God only speaks and acts on earth through human agency or encounter, then to describe his Word and his acts means also to describe man. This is not to reduce God to a mere extension of man or some sort of psychological phenomenon. Even as Herrmann found a sure anchor for faith in the "inner life of Jesus," so Bultmann finds it in "existential encounter" with Jesus, whose freedom of choice issued in the cross. God's act in Jesus of Nazareth, precisely because the cross and the resurrection are at the center of it, cannot be considered mere bald fact, to be discovered by impersonal investigation. It is an "eschatological fact." That is, it is filled with significance for man's ultimate destiny,[3] and is constantly reaffirmed in the proclamation of the Church.

We come here to the selection from Bultmann's works, an excerpt entitled by its heading within a larger work: "The Language of the Act of God." Here the veteran demythologizer remarks that an element in people's resistance to his treatment of Scripture may be the fear that, if we carry this kind of treatment to its logical conclusion, we will have no language left in which to speak of an act of God. Such phrases will have become mere symbolic references to subjective experience.

Bultmann notes bluntly that if the words "act of God" are to have any true meaning, they must refer to an act in a "real, objective sense"—not just a symbol or metaphor. Yet if the action of God, however real,

[3] Compare Herrmann's stress upon an "inner fact relation." The tone is different, of course, since Herrmann puts this in terms of a value orientation rather than an existential decision.

is not to be thought of as a "worldly phenomenon" (an event objectively located, apart from the experience of persons), then it can only be spoken of by speaking at the same time of ourselves. For we are "existentially concerned." Since our lives are conducted in time and space, man's encounter with God can only be "here and now." And this event —"our being questioned, judged, and blessed by him"—is what we mean by an act of God. The wording is not symbolic or metaphorical. It simply assumes a certain similarity between God's intercourse with man and people's fellowship with each other.

The ancient mythology, Bultmann continues, demands that we consider God's acts as interruptions to ordinary life. A miracle is a "tearing asunder" of the normal course of nature, history, or the soul. Divine activity is thus dramatized on the plane of worldly events. But this is not how we ought to think of it. The only way to keep the transcendental quality of divine activity is to realize that the "closed weft of history" is left undisturbed. The only visible, ascertainable thing before us is the natural happening—as natural as ever. But "in it is accomplished the hidden act of God."

Here Bultmann takes some trouble to fend off confusion with pantheism and other possible misconceptions. Faith is not a set of truths given us beforehand, that enables us to label an event an act of God. "God is everywhere," for instance, cannot be used as a mere universal dogma, right and left—as any former inmate of a prison camp can testify. Yet one may rise to this realization existentially, under pressure and in the very midst of a specific situation. Although the sequence of cause and effect is not sundered, the smooth fabric of life seen objectively is nevertheless transcended. It happens as a whole, and paradoxically. We see this even in merely speaking of ourselves. "I myself, my real self, am not more visible or ascertainable than an act of God." And the same paradox remains: that we understand an outward event, definable in ordinary terms of cause and effect, to be an act of God. This is the only kind of true miracle. It is *not* an interruption of nature, something which, if it occurred, could—and should—be investigated and described, open to every probing test of science.

Well then, has this "act" any objective reality? Is God anything more than a subjective experience?

Such questions imply a misunderstanding of the nature of man's life. If we say that only faith, "aware of the divine encounter," can speak of God, this means quite truly that anyone who speaks of an act of God therefore speaks automatically of himself. But it does not mean that God has no independent existence. Man's real being, his "historic" inward experience, "consists of encounters." In the human experience of love there is encounter. But it can only be known *as love* by the person

who undergoes it. To others it is not directly visible as such, but only as a psychological or emotional event subject to interpretation. All facets of the experience of loving or being loved—whether we reciprocate or not, whether we understand it or not, even if it rouses our hatred—are "existential reactions." We are not the same after the encounter as before. Yet all this does not change the fact that only *in* the encounter can it be seen as love.

The same is true of faith, of perception of the Word as an act of God. Faith is man's response to the proclamation of the Word. It is his hearing of Scripture, not as a collection of doctrine or of other people's beliefs, but as something that inspires religious experience in himself. It is our hearing of Scripture, when this hearing consists inwardly of "encounter and response." "The Word of God is hidden in Scripture" like any other act of God in the web of life. Salvation, too, is a matter of faith and not susceptible of proof. It is like love and trust, which cannot be objectively apprehended at all, but only "*in* the love and *in* the trust." An element of risk is always present.

Thus it appears that the activity of God, and redemption itself, are neither visible nor open to proof, and the Spirit that comes to the believer cannot be perceived in any ordinary external way—we can only speak of these things by speaking of ourselves. Then surely faith is a new understanding of existence and of self. Bultmann notes that this element in his definition of faith has roused opposition. The idea of "existential self-understanding," he says, has already been widely misunderstood—as if "revelation" were merely something in human consciousness and no longer a fact that changes reality.

But self-understanding need not be conscious. Witness the small child's world and relationships in various respects. Moreover, in new self-understanding we also have new understanding of the object of encounter. This understanding is never a possession. It must be renewed "every morning."

The character of faith is freedom for the future. This interpretation, says Bultmann, does not eliminate ultimate purpose or New Testament eschatology, as his critics claim. Philosophic existential analysis shows, it is true, without the help of faith, that freedom for the future is necessary for authentic being. But analysis cannot *give* that freedom "any more than it can impart life as a whole." All it can do is to tell us that if we want authentic being we must be free for the future. This is an awful reality, for it means the nothingness of man. We cannot ourselves obtain freedom, and this leaves us to dread. Here is where God meets man —where man is nothing, and only there. Of the "readiness to dread" we must say in the end with Luther, "Let us rejoice in our tribulations." For it is the gift of faith and identical with freedom—freedom *from* our

old selves, *for* the new—freedom from the fallacy at the root of all sin: that we can lead our lives securely by our own resolve.

In his final paragraphs Bultmann discusses the "once-for-allness" of the event of Christ in the world. It is not as we usually think of it. The living God is only seen in the moment when the Word makes revelation understandable to us. The human figure of Christ is an act of God. This is how he is known in the New Testament—*Christus pro me* who encounters me as the Word. The "once" of the eschatological event—this happening that bears on the final destiny of man—is not a "datable uniqueness." It is a once-for-all event continuously re-enacted in the Word of proclamation. It tells us that the grace of God has acted on our behalf, for his having acted is present to us now.

The writer finishes by considering the Church and faith's need for mythology of another kind, as well as the relation of faith to holiness in the world.

During World War II Bultmann wrote and published a controversial essay, "New Testament and Mythology," which roused widespread repercussions. It was a kind of manifesto in which he expressed his approach to New Testament mythology and interpretation. By 1952 the discussion had been so fertile and varied that H. W. Bartsch brought out in two volumes the original essay together with replies from a number of Bultmann's critics, and three further essays by the great New Testament scholar. Our selection is from one of the latter, entitled simply "Bultmann Replies to His Critics," of which we reproduce here the section under the subtitle given (about three-quarters of the essay and running to the end of it).

(From Rudolf Bultmann's reply to his critics at the end of *Kerygma and Myth,* Vol. I, H. W. Bartsch, ed., and Reginald H. Fuller, trans. [London: S.P.C.K., 1953], pp. 196–211, the passage entitled as shown. Reprinted by permission of S.P.C.K. and Harper & Row, Publishers. Footnotes are the writer's.)

2. THE LANGUAGE OF THE ACT OF GOD

Perhaps we may say that behind all the objections raised against demythologizing there lurks a fear that if it were carried to its logical conclusion it would make it impossible for us to speak of an act of God, or if we did it would only be the symbolical description of a subjective experience. For is it not mythology to speak of an act of God as though it were an objective event in which the grace of God encounters man?

In the first place, we must reply that if such language is to have any meaning at all it must denote an act in a real, objective sense, and not just a symbolical or pictorial expression. On the other hand, if the action

of God is not to be conceived as a worldly phenomenon capable of being apprehended apart from its existential reference, it can only be spoken of by speaking simultaneously of myself as the person who is existentially concerned. To speak of the act of God means to speak at the same time of my existence. Since human life is lived out in time and space, man's encounter with God can only be a specific event here and now. This event, our being addressed by God here and now, our being questioned, judged, and blessed by him, is what we mean when we speak of an act of God.

Such language is therefore neither symbolical nor pictorial, though it is certainly analogical,[1] for it assumes an analogy between the activity of God and that of man and between the fellowship of God and man and that of man with man.

The meaning of this language requires further clarification. Mythological thought regards the divine activity, whether in nature or in history, as an interference with the course of nature, history, or the life of the soul, a tearing of it asunder—a miracle, in fact. Thus it objectifies the divine activity and projects it on to the place of worldly happenings. A miracle—i.e. an act of God—is not visible or ascertainable like worldly events. The only way to preserve the unworldly, transcendental character of the divine activity is to regard it not as an interference in worldly happenings, but something accomplished *in* them in such a way that the closed weft of history as it presents itself to objective observation is left undisturbed. To every other eye than the eye of faith the action of God is hidden. Only the "natural" happening is generally visible and ascertainable. In it is accomplished the hidden act of God.

It is easy to object that this is to transform Christian faith into a pantheistic piety. But pantheism believes in a direct identity of worldly happening with the divine activity, whereas faith asserts their paradoxical identity, which can only be believed in the concrete here and now and in the teeth of outward appearance. When I am encountered by such an event, I can in faith accept it as the gift of God or as his judgment, although I can also see it within its context in nature or history. In faith I can understand a thought or a resolve as something which is the work of God without necessarily removing it from its place in the chain of cause and effect.

Christian faith is not a *Weltanschauung* like pantheism. Pantheism is an anterior conviction that everything that happens is the work of God, since God is thought to be immanent in the world. Christian faith, on the other hand, believes that God acts upon us and addresses us in

[1] On the subject of analogy cf. Erich Frank, *Philosophical Language and Religious Truth*, 1945, pp. 44, 161–4, 179, etc.

the specific here and now. This belief springs from an awareness of being addressed by the grace of God which confronts us in Jesus Christ. By this grace we are enabled to see that God makes all things work together for good to them that love him (Rom. 8. 28). This kind of faith, however, is not a knowledge possessed once and for all, not a *Weltanschauung*. It can only be an event occurring on specific occasions, and it can remain alive only when the believer is constantly asking himself what God is saying to him here and now. God is generally just as hidden for him as he is for everyone else. But from time to time the believer sees concrete happenings in the light of the word of grace which is addressed to him, and then faith can and ought to apprehend it as the act of God, even if its meaning is still enigmatic. If pantheism can say that any event it likes is the work of the Godhead, quite apart from its meaning in personal encounter, Christian faith can only say that in such-and-such an event God is acting in a hidden way. What God is doing now —it is of course not to be identified *tout court* with the visible occurrence—I may not know as yet, and perhaps I shall never know. But still I must ask what he is trying to say to me through it, even if all he has to say is that I must just grin and bear it.

Similarly, faith in God as Creator is not a piece of knowledge given in advance, in virtue of which every happening may be designated an act of God. Such faith is genuine only when I understand myself here and now existentially to be the creature of God, though it need not necessarily take the form of knowledge consciously acquired as the reresult of reflection. Faith in the divine omnipotence is not an anterior conviction that there is a Being who can do everything: it can only be attained existentially by submitting to the power of God exercising pressure upon me here and now, and this too need not necessarily be raised to the level of consciousness. The propositions of faith are not abstract truths. Those who have endured the hardships of a Russian prison camp know better than anyone else that you cannot say "*Terra ubique Domini*" [The whole earth is the Lord's] as an explicit dogma: it is something which can be uttered only on specific occasions in existential decision.

Hence it is clear that for my existential life, realized as it is in decision in face of encounter, the world is no longer a closed weft of cause and effect. In faith the closed weft presented or produced by objective observation is transcended, though not as in mythological thought. For mythology imagines it to be torn asunder, whereas faith transcends it as a whole when it speaks of the activity of God. In the last resort it is already transcended when I speak of myself, for I myself, my real self, am no more visible or ascertainable than an act of God. When worldly happenings are viewed as a closed series, as not only scientific under-

standing but even workaday life requires, there is certainly no room for any act of God. But this is just the paradox of faith: it understands an ascertainable event in its context in nature and history as the act of God. Faith cannot dispense with its "nevertheless."

This is the only genuine faith in miracle.[2] The conception of miracles as ascertainable processes is incompatible with the hidden character of God's activity. It surrenders the acts of God to objective observation, and thus makes belief in miracles (or rather superstition) susceptible to the justifiable criticisms of science.

If then it be true that we cannot speak of an act of God without speaking simultaneously of our own existence, if such an act cannot be established apart from its existential reference, if it dispenses with the objectivity attainable by impartial scientific investigation (e.g., by experiment), we inevitably ask whether divine activity has any objective reality at all. Does it exist apart from our own subjective experience? Is not faith reduced to experience pure and simple? Is God no more than an experience in the soul, despite the fact that faith only makes sense when it is directed towards a God with a real existence outside the believer?

This objection rests upon a psychological misconception of what is meant by the existential life of man.[3] When we say that faith alone, the faith which is aware of the divine encounter, can speak of God, and that therefore when the believer speaks of an act of God he is *ipso facto* speaking of himself as well, it by no means follows that God has no real existence apart from the believer or the act of believing. It follows only if faith and experience are interpreted in a psychologizing sense.[4] If human Being is properly understood as historic Being, whose experiences consist of encounters, it is clear that faith, which speaks of its encounter with the acts of God, cannot defend itself against the charge of illusion, for the encounter with God is not objective like a worldly event. Yet there is no need for faith, in the sense of an existential encounter, to refute that charge, and indeed it could not do so without misunderstanding its own meaning.

What encounter means as such may be illustrated from our own life in history. The love of another is an encounter whose essential character depends upon its being an event. For it cannot be apprehended as love

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[2] Cp. *Glauben und Verstehen,* pp. 214–28, esp. p. 224 f.; W. Herrmann, *Offenbarung und Wunder,* 1908, esp. pp. 33 ff. Herrmann rightly observes that faith in prayer, like belief in miracles, transcends the idea of nature.

[3] I might also say "by human subjectivity," provided this is understood in Kierkegaard's sense as "being subject"—i.e., the personal being of man.

[4] When W. Herrmann and A. Schlatter speak of experience, neither of them means a bare psychic phenomenon.

by objective observation, but only by myself who am encountered by it.[5] Looked at from the outside, it is certainly not visible as love in the real sense of the word, but only as a phenomenon of spiritual or psychic history which is open to various interpretations. Of course the love with which a man loves me does not depend for its reality upon my understanding or reciprocating it.[6] This is just what we learn when we do reciprocate another's love. Even if we fail to understand it or open our hearts to it, it still evokes a kind of existential reaction. For to fail to understand it, to close our hearts to it, to respond by hatred—all these are still existential reactions. In each case we are no longer the same after the encounter as we were before it, though that does not for a moment alter the fact that it is only in encounter that it can be seen as love.

That God cannot be seen apart from faith does not mean that he does not exist apart from it. That an encounter with the Word of God makes a difference to man, whether he opens his heart to it or not, is a fact which only faith can know, the faith which understands that unbelief is a token of God's judgment.

True it is impossible to prove that faith is related to its object. But, as Herrmann taught us long ago, it is just here that its strength lies. For if it were susceptible to proof it would mean that we could know and establish God apart from faith, and that would be placing him on a level with the world of tangible, objective reality.[7] In that realm we are certainly justified in demanding proof.

If faith is man's response to the proclamation of the word of God's grace, a word whose origin and credentials are to be found in the New Testament, must we say that it cannot be proved by the appeal to Scripture? Is not faith simply the hearing of Scripture as the Word of God? That is indeed so, but only when Scripture is understood neither as a compendium of doctrines nor as a document enshrining the beliefs of

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[5] I cannot see why E. Schweizer calls the love awakened by another an "inner-psychic" process. For love can only exist in encounter or mutual relationship. He completely fails to grasp the existential meaning of love when he writes: "Love awakens more in man than does an ideal. It awakens the desire for fellowship, a concern of the I for the Thou, sexuality, or what you will(!). But it is still an inner-psychic process, for the love of the other is only an external stimulus. Admittedly it affects the whole range of our emotional life, and not only the mind, as when we receive instruction, or our enthusiasm, as when we are presented with an ideal."

[6] E. Schweizer, "Zur Interpretation des Kreuzes bei R. Bultmann" (*Festschrift für Maurice Goguel*, 1950).

[7] This does not of course imply that the idea of God is properly inconceivable apart from faith. The idea of God is an expression of man's search for him, a search which motivates all human existence. *Vide supra*, p. 192, and cf. my essay, "Die Frage der naturlichen Offenbarung" in *Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen*, pp. 1–26.

other people, yet inspiring enough to evoke religious experience in us. It is so only when Scripture is heard as a word addressed personally to ourselves, as kerygma—i.e. when the experience consists in encounter and response to the address. That Scripture is the Word of God is something which happens only in the here and now of encounter; it is not a fact susceptible to objective proof. The Word of God is hidden in Scripture, just like any other act of his.[8]

Nor has God offered a proof of himself in the so-called facts of salvation. For these too are objects of faith, and as facts of salvation are ascertainable and visible to faith alone. Our knowledge of them does not precede our faith or provide a basis for it, as other convictions are based on proven facts. In a sense, of course, they do provide a basis for faith, but only as facts which are themselves apprehended in faith. It is just the same with human trust and love. These too are not based on any trustworthiness or lovableness in another which could be objectively ascertained, but upon the nature of the other apprehended *in* the love and *in* the trust. There can be no trust and no love without this element of risk. Hence, as Herrmann used to say, the ground and object of faith do not fall apart, but are identical, for the very reason that we cannot say what God is like in himself, but only what he does to us.[9]

If then the activity of God is not visible or open to proof like worldly entities, if the event of redemption is not an ascertainable process, if, we may add, the Spirit granted to the believer is not a phenomenon susceptible to worldly apprehension, if we cannot speak of these things without speaking of our own existence, it follows that faith is a new understanding of existence, and that the activity of God vouchsafes to us a new understanding of self, as Luther said: *"et ita Deus per suum exire nos facit ad nos ipsos introire, et per sui cognitionem infert nobis et nostri cognitionem"* ["and thus God by extending himself brings us to ourselves, and in giving us a knowledge of himself he gives us the knowledge of ourselves"].[10]

It is my definition of faith as an understanding of existence which has evoked the most opposition.[11] Is it really so difficult to understand what existential self-understanding means? At any rate it shows a complete

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[8] Cf. H. Diem's criticism of the view that the Word of God is available in the Bible *ante et extra usum* (*ibid.*, p. 5).

[9] *Vide supra*, p. 192 f.

[10] *Schol. ad Rom.* 3. 5, ed. Ficker, p. 67, 21–3.

[11] E.g. H. Thielicke, *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt* 46 (1942), pp. 129 ff., *Kerygma and Myth*, p. 146 f. No wonder that the declaration of the Provincial Council of the Evangelical Confessional Fellowship in Wüttermberg (in *Für Arbeit und Besinnung*, 1952, 18–23) echoes this complaint. The only amusing thing about it is that the declaration rules out in advance any chance of clearing up possible misunderstandings.

failure to understand its meaning when it is objected that my definition reduces the event of revelation to a cause which sets self-understanding in motion, so that it is no longer a fact which interferes and changes reality, like a miracle. All that happens, it is claimed, is consciousness, and the content of the self-understanding is a timeless truth, which once perceived remains true quite apart from the cause which set it in motion and "cranked it up."[12] Is this what Luther meant by *"cognito nostri"* ["self-recognition"]?

But perhaps I did not express myself clearly enough, and am therefore myself to blame for the confusion which lies at the root of this misunderstanding. Existential self-understanding is being confounded with the existentialist understanding of human Being elaborated by philosophical analysis. The affirmations of the latter are certainly meant to be timeless truths, and in so far as they are adequate, they may pass as such. But existentialist analysis points so to speak beyond itself, by showing (what in itself would be a timeless truth) that existential self-understanding can be appropriated only existentially. In my existential self-understanding I do not learn what existence means in the abstract, but I understand myself in my concrete here and now, in my concrete encounters.[13]

It goes without saying that this existential self-understanding need not be conscious. It permeates and controls imperceptibly all anxiety and resolve, all joy and dread, and is called in question at every encounter. It is something which sustains us even in childhood. For the child understands himself as a child (and therefore those who produced him as his parents) in his life, his trust, his sense of security, in his gratitude, his reverence, and in his obedience. When he is disobedient he forfeits this self-understanding, though never completely, for it makes itself known in a guilty conscience.

This illustration is enough to show that in existential self-understanding there is an understanding not only of self but also of the object of encounter, the person or the environment which is encountered. As a self who exists historically I am not isolated either from my environment or from my own past and future, which are in a special way a part of my environment. If, for instance, my encounter with another's love should vouchsafe to me a new understanding of self, what happens is by no means restricted to consciousness, at least if consciousness is to be taken as a psychic rather than as an existential phenomenon, which is what Thielicke and others wrongly suppose. By understanding myself in this encounter I understand the other in such a way that the whole

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[12] Thielicke, 148. Cf. also my reply to Thielicke in *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt*, 1943, 3 ff.

[13] *Vide supra*, p. 127 f. [in present volume—Eds. G. & M.]

world appears in a new light, which means that it has in fact become an entirely different world. I acquire a new insight into and a new judgment of my own past and future, which means that they have become my past and future in a new sense. I submit to new demands and acquire a new readiness for further encounters. Clearly such an understanding cannot be possessed as a timeless truth, for its validity depends upon its being constantly renewed, and upon an understanding of the imperative it involves. We may say with St. Paul, *mutatis mutandis:* "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit also let us walk" (Gal. 5. 25).

For exactly the same applies to the self-understanding of faith, in which man understands himself anew under the word of encounter. And just as in human contacts the new understanding created by encountering another in love and trust is kept pure only when it permanently retains its connexion with the other who is encountered, so too the self-understanding granted by faith never becomes a possession, but is kept pure only as a response to the repeated encounter of the Word of God, which proclaims the act of God in Christ in such a way as continually to represent it.[14] "His compassions fail not, they are new every morning." True, but I can only be genuinely aware of it when I perceive it anew every morning, for as a timeless truth it is meaningless. Granted this, however, I can know that I myself am renewed every morning by it, that I am one who allows myself to be renewed by it.[15]

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[14] Hence Wiesner ("Anthropologische oder theologische Schriftauslegung?" *Evangelische Theologie,* 1950/51, p. 49 ff.) completely misses the point when he charges me with reducing the Biblical understanding of human existence to man's understanding of himself, and therefore secularizing the Christian proclamation (p. 56), and with reducing the redemptive act of God in Christ to the immanence of human existence and its realization in our life in time (*ibid.,* p. 60).

[15] E. Schweizer thinks (*op. cit.,* p. 236) that I am bound to make a theoretical distinction "between an act of faith which sees in the event of the cross the revelation of the love of God, and a second act of faith for which the first act sets us free . . . , an act which consists in a radical change of self-understanding." No, not at any price! For I cannot imagine how we can see and believe the revelation of God's love without being at the same time set free for a new understanding of self. I simply cannot understand how I can believe that I am really delivered from sin before I "change" my self-understanding (this is what Schweizer actually says, instead of saying "my self-understanding *is changed*"). I am afraid my answer to this must be: "*nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum*" ["you have not yet considered the sheer weight of sin"]. The love of God is not a phenomenon whose apprehension leaves a man the same as he was before. Hence even the apprehension itself must be attributed to the operation of the Holy Ghost. No proclamation which possesses "the character of a simple Biblical report of what has happened" can tell a man "that this liberation is a reality antecedent to and transcending all his understanding" (*ibid.,* p. 237 f.). For the reality of the deliverance is not something which a report of a happening can display. I hope the ensuing argument will demonstrate Schweizer's failure to recognize the eschatological import of the event of redemption.

Further, my critics have objected that my demythologizing of the New Testament results in the elimination of its eschatology. On the contrary, I am convinced that my interpretation exposes its meaning as never before, at least for those who have given up thinking in terms of mythology. For my restatement of it demonstrates the character of faith as freedom for the future.

Certainly existentialist analysis may assert that freedom for the future is a mark of authentic Being. But is this knowledge sufficient to enable man as he actually is to attain it? It cannot do this any more than it can impart existence as a whole. All it can do is to tell us that if we want to attain authentic existence we must be free for the future. It can only bring home to us the awful reality of this fact by saying that for it—i.e. for philosophical analysis—each man's particular future can in the last resort be defined as "nothingness," and that it can understand freedom for the future solely as "the readiness for dread" (*Angstbereitschaft*), which man has to accept by an act of resolve.

Indeed, faith is identical with this readiness for dread, for faith knows that God encounters us at the very point where the human prospect is nothingness, and only at that point. This is exactly how Luther interprets "Let us rejoice in our tribulations" (Rom. 5. 4): "*Unde cum Dominus habet nomen Salvatoris, adjutoris in tribulationibus, in multis locis, qui noluerit pati, quantum in ipso est, spoliat eum suis propriis titulis et nominibus. Sic enim nullus erit ei homini Jhesus, i.e. Salvator, quia non vult esse damnatus; nulles eius Deus creator, quia non vult esse nihil, cuius ille sit creator*" ["Since the Lord has the name of Savior, of helper in tribulation, in many passages, whoever is unwilling to suffer as much as lies within himself robs him of his proper titles and names. For in this way Jesus will be no Savior to that man because he does not wish to be damned; nor will he be God the Creator to him because he does not wish to be nothing, from which creation comes"] (*Schol. in Rom.* 5. 3; ed. Ficker, p. 135, 20 ff.). Similarly: "*. . . quia natura Dei est, prius destruere et annihilare, quicquid in nobis est, antequam sua donet*" [" . . . because it is the nature of God first of all to destroy and annihilate whatever is in us before he gives of himself"] (*ibid.* in 8. 26; p. 203, 4 f.). Those "*qui sibi sancti videntur*" ["who merely think themselves holy"] are those who "*Deum amore concupiscentiae diligunt, i.e. propter salutem et requiem aeternam aut propter fugam inferni, hoc est non propter Deum, sed propter se ipsos.*" ["love God with the love of concupiscence, i.e. for the sake of salvation and eternal rest or escaping hell; not for God but for themselves."] With them are contrasted those "*qui vere Deum diligunt amore filiali et amicitiae. . . . Tales enim libere sese offerunt in omnem voluntatem Dei, etiam ad infernum et mortem aeternaliter, si Deus vellet tantum, ut sua voluntas plene fiat*" ["who truly love God

with a love appropriate to sons and friends. . . . Such persons freely offer themselves to the whole will of God, even to hell and eternal death if God should wish it, in order that his will be fully done"] (*ibid.* in 9. 3; p. 217, 18 ff.). God "*non potest ostendere virtutem suam in electis, nisi prius ostendat eis infirmitatem eorum et abscondat virtutem eorum ad nihilum redigat, ut non glorientur in virtute sua propria*" ["cannot show his power in his chosen ones until he first shows them their weakness and hides their power, reducing it to nothing that they may not glory in their own strength"] (*ibid.* in 9. 17; p. 229, 21 ff.). "*Deus non salvat nisi peccatores, non erudit nisi stultos et insipientes, non ditat nisi pauperes, non vivificat nisi mortuos*" ["God saves only sinners, he teaches only the foolish and the simple minded, he enriches only the poor, and he gives life only to the dead"] (*ibid.* in 10. 19; p. 252, 18 ff.).[16] Of course, that "*amor filialis et amicitiae*" ["love appropriate to sons and friends"] does not arise through the resolute acceptance of readiness for dread, for "*non est ex natura, sed spiritu sancto solum*" ["it is not derivative from nature, but exclusively from the Holy Spirit"] (*ibid.*, p. 217, 28). Readiness for dread is thus the gift of faith, and is identical with freedom from ourselves (= our old self) for ourselves (= our new self), freedom from the fallacy which lies at the root of sin—namely, that we can base our own existence upon our own resolve, and thus attain freedom for the future. As St. Paul himself put it: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15, 54).

But our critics are still not satisfied. If it is possible to speak of an act of God only in the sense of what he does to me on specific occasions, is this not to deny that he has acted once and for all in Christ on behalf of the whole world? Does it not eliminate the ἐφάπαξ [once-for-all] of Rom. 6: 10?[17] Am I really "eliminating the reality of time as a unique fact of the past [sic] from our understanding of the event of redemption in the New Testament sense of the word"?[18]

From what has already been said it should be clear that I am not talking about an idea of God, but am trying to speak of the living God in whose hands our time rests, and who encounters us at specific moments in our time. But since further explanation is required, the answer may be given in a single sentence: God encounters us in His Word—i.e. in a

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[16] Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 206, 10 ff.; 216, 18 ff.; 245, 4 ff. (Man stands in a relation of guilt both towards God and towards his creatures; he who would atone for this guilt "*libens ac volens it in nihilum et mortem et damnationem . . .*".). Cf. also the quotations from Luther in F. Gogarten, *Die Verkündigung Jesu Christi*, 1948, pp. 306 f., 331.

[17] Emil Brunner, *Die christliche Lehre von der Schöpfung* (*Dogmatik* II), 1950, p. 314 f.; E. Schweizer, *op. cit.*, pp. 231 ff.; Schniewind, *supra*, p. 66 ff.

[18] Kümmel, *Coniect. Neotest.*, p. 115; "Mythos im Neuen Testament" *Theol. Ztschr.*, 1950, p. 321 ff. Cf. A. N. Wilder, *Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus*, 1950, p. 126 f.

particular word, in the proclamation inaugurated with Jesus Christ. True, God encounters us at all times and in all places, but he cannot be seen everywhere unless his Word comes as well and makes the moment of revelation intelligible to us in its own light, as Luther not infrequently observed. Just as the divine omnipotence and omniscience cannot be realized existentially apart from his word uttered with reference to a particular moment and heard in that moment, so this Word is what it is only in the moment in reference to which it is uttered. It is not a timeless truth, but a definite word addressed at a particular occasion, whose eternal quality lies not in endless endurance but in its actual presence at specific moments. It is the Word of God only in so far as it is a word which happens on specific occasions, and not in virtue of the ideas it contains—e.g. the mercy and grace of God (however true these things may be). It is the Word of God because it confronts me with his mercy and grace. It is only in this way that it is really the *verbum externum* [external word]: it is not a possession secured in knowledge, but an address which encounters us ever and again.

This is why it is a word addressed *realiter* [really] to me on a specific occasion, whether it be in the Church's proclamation, or in the Bible mediated through the Church as the Word of God addressed to me, or through the word of my fellow Christian.[19] That is why the living Word of God is never a word of human wisdom but an event encountered in history. The fact that it originates in an historical event provides the credentials for its utterance on each specific occasion. This event is Jesus Christ.

That God has acted in Jesus Christ is, however, not a fact of past history open to historical verification. That Jesus Christ is the Logos of God can never be proved by the objective investigation of the historian.[20] Rather, the fact that the New Testament describes the figure and work of Christ in mythological terms is enough to show that if they are the act of redemption they must not be understood in their context of world history. The paradox is just this, that a human figure, Jesus of Nazareth

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[19] It goes without saying that this Word need not necessarily be uttered at the same moment of time in which it becomes a decisive word for me. It is possible for something I heard yesterday or even thirty years ago to become a decisive word for me now; then it begins (or perhaps begins once more) to be a word spoken to me, and is therefore shown to be a word addressed with reference to my present situation.

[20] That is why I cannot share Wilder's concern (*op. cit.*, p. 216 f.) that the actual history of Jesus should be verifiable by the historian, or Wiesner's concern that it should at least be relatively ascertainable (*op. cit.*, p. 64 f.). If Wiesner imagines that by saying, "It is not the event of redemption because it is the cross of Christ, but it is the cross of Christ because it is the event of redemption," I am turning the whole thing upside down, he obviously does not see this affirmation about the cross of Christ can never be a statement of fact, but only a confession of faith.

(see esp. John 6. 42), and the destiny of that figure—i.e. a human being and his fate, with a recognizable place in world history, and therefore exposed to the objective observation of the historian and intelligible within their context in world history—are not thus apprehended and understood as what they really are, namely, as the act of God, as *the* eschatological event.

But this is how Jesus Christ is understood in the New Testament (e.g. Gal. 4. 4; John 3. 17–19). The only question is whether this understanding is necessarily bound up with the cosmic eschatology in which the New Testament places it—with the exception of the Fourth Gospel, where the cosmic eschatology has already become picture language, and where the eschatological event is seen in the coming of Jesus as the Word, the Word of God which is continually re-presented in the word of proclamation. But the way for this demythologizing was already paved in the primitive Church with its understanding of itself as the eschatological community, the congregation of the saints. The process was carried a stage further by St. Paul with his conception of the believer as a "new creature," since the old is passed away and the new already come (II Cor. 5. 17). Henceforward faith means to exist eschatologically, to exist in detachment from the world, to have passed over from death unto life (I Cor. 7. 29–31; John 5. 24; I John 4, 14). At the same time eschatological existence is possible only in faith; it is not yet realized in sight (II Cor. 5. 7.). That is to say, it is not a worldly phenomenon, but is realized in the new self-understanding which faith imparts. Since it is faith in the crucified and risen Christ, this self-understanding is not an autonomous movement of the human will, but the response to the Word of God, which proclaims the manifestation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Since he is the Word of God, Christ is *ante et extra me* [before and outside me], not, however, as a fact open to objective verification and chronologically datable before me, but as the *Christus pro me* [Christ for me], who encounters me as the Word. The eschatological event, which Christ is, is consequently realized invariably and solely *in concreto* [in the concrete] here and now, where the Word is proclaimed (II Cor. 6. 2; John 5. 24) and meets with faith or unbelief (II Cor. 2. 15 f.; John 3. 18; 9. 39).

Thus the ἐφάπαξ is understood as never before in its true sense of the "once" of the eschatological event. For it does not mean the datable uniqueness and finality of an event of past history, but teaches us in a high degree of paradox to believe that just such an event of the past is the once-and-for-all eschatological event, which is continually re-enacted in the word of proclamation. This proclamation is a word which addresses me personally, and tells me that the prevenient grace of God has already acted on my behalf, though not in such a way that I can look back upon

this act of God as a datable event of the past, but in the sense that God's having acted is present as an eschatological Now.

The Word of God is what it is only in event, and the paradox lies in the fact that this Word is identical with the Word which originated in the apostolic preaching, which has been fixed in Scripture and which is handed on by men in the Church's proclamation;[21] the word of Christ whose contents may also be formulated in a series of abstract propositions. The ἐφάπαξ means that it cannot be the one without being the other, and that the abstract propositions can only become the Word of God when it is proclamation—i.e. when it takes the shape of an event here and now in the *viva vox* [living voice]—that is the eschatological meaning of the ἐφάπαξ.

The Word of God and the Church are inseparable. The Church is constituted by the Word of God as the congregation of the elect, and the proclamation of the Word is not a statement of abstract truths, but a proclamation which is duly authorized and therefore needs bearers with proper credentials (II Cor. 5. 18 f.). Just as the Word of God becomes his Word only in event, so the Church is really the Church only when it too becomes an event. For the Church is the eschatological congregation of the saints whose identity with a sociological institution and a phenomenon of the world's history can be asserted only in terms of paradox.[22]

If the challenge of demythologizing was first raised by the conflict between the mythological cosmology of the Bible and the modern scientific world view, it at once became evident that the restatement of mythology is a requirement of faith itself. For faith needs to be emancipated from its association with a world view expressed in objective terms, whether it be a mythical or a scientific one. That conflict is a proof that faith has not yet discovered the proper terms in which to express itself, it has not realized that it cannot be logically proven, it has not clearly understood

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[21] In other words, a man just like myself speaks to me the Word of God: in him the Word of God becomes incarnate. For the incarnation is likewise an eschatological event and not a datable event of the past; it is an event which is continually being re-enacted in the event of the proclamation. I may refer at this point to my essay on "The Christological Confession of the World Council of Churches." *Ev. Theologie,* 1951, p. 1 ff. It seems high time that Christology was emancipated from its subordination to an ontology of objective thought and re-stated in a new ontological terminology.

[22] A. Wilder appears to have overlooked the paradoxical character of this identity when he criticizes my interpretation for its excessive individualism, on the ground that the acts of God always have "a social and corporate reference" (*Eschatology and Ethics in the Teaching of Jesus,* 1950, p. 65). While the acts of God undoubtedly have this reference, it is hard to see how a "social and corporate" nature can be predicated of an eschatological community.

that its basis and its object are identical, it has not clearly apprehended the transcendental and hidden character of the divine activity, and by its failure to perceive its own "Nevertheless" it has tried to project God and his acts into the sphere of objective reality. Starting as it does from the modern world view, and challenging the Biblical mythology and the tradition proclamation of the Church, this new kind of criticism is performing for faith the supreme service of recalling it to a radical consideration of its own nature. It is just this call that our demythologizing seeks to follow.

The invisibility of God excludes every myth which tries to make him and his acts visible. Because of this, however, it also excludes every conception of invisibility and mystery which is formulated in terms of objective thought. God withdraws himself from the objective view: he can only be believed upon in defiance of all outward appearance, just as the justification of the sinner can only be believed upon in defiance of the accusations of the conscience.

Our radical attempt to demythologize the New Testament is in fact a perfect parallel to St. Paul's and Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from the works of the Law. Or rather, it carries this doctrine to its logical conclusion in the field of epistemology. Like the doctrine of justification it destroys every false security and every false demand for it on the part of man, whether he seeks it in his good works or in his ascertainable knowledge. The man who wishes to believe in God as his God must realize that he has nothing in his hand on which to base his faith. He is suspended in mid-air, and cannot demand a proof of the Word which addresses him. For the ground and object of faith are identical. Security can be found only by abandoning all security, by being ready, as Luther put it, to plunge into the inner darkness.

Faith in God means faith in justification, a faith which rejects the idea that certain actions can be marked off as conveying sanctification. Faith in God means faith in creation, and this likewise rejects the idea that certain areas of status and event in the world can be marked off as holy. We have learnt from Luther that there are no holy places anywhere in the world. The whole world is profane, though this does not make any difference to the fact that *"Terra ubique Domini,"* which is something which can only be believed in contrary to all appearance. It is not priestly consecration which makes the house of God holy, but only the Word of proclamation. Similarly, the framework of nature and history is profane, and it is only in the light of the word of proclamation that nature and history become for the believer, contrary to all appearance, the field of the divine activity. It is faith which makes the world profane and restores to it its proper autonomy as the field of man's labours. But it is just for this reason that the believer's relation to the world and

to the world view of modern science is the paradoxical relation of ὡς μή [as if not].

Clearly for Bultmann the kerygma—the living pronouncement of the Word of God, rather than mere external historical fact, is what stands behind, or within, the proclamation of the Church and sustains the present life of faith. Yet in general he allows the objectively historical aspect of Jesus to lurk around the edges of his thought, almost as a sort of "left hand" of faith. The dualism is if anything sharper than with Herrmann, his former teacher. His affinities with Herrmann are quite apparent, while the paradoxical tension is closer to Kierkegaard.

Luther viewed the law as "a schoolmaster to bring the sinner to the gospel." In the same ways, Bultmann stresses the more external historical approach precisely in order to make room for the deeper experience: the faith that comes out of existential decision. Faith does not come as a direct result of historical knowledge in itself. It is an eschatological event, in which the ultimate purpose of God is involved, rooted in time through the cross. Objective historical study is important as a means of removing the false supports we try to set up for faith. But in the last analysis salvation comes, not through any objective fact of history, but by faith alone!

9. Karl Barth

1886-

Swiss theologian. Born in Berne, his father a professor of New Testament theology. Studied in Berne, Berlin, Tübingen, Marburg. Pastor in Geneva and other Swiss posts. During World War I wrote Der Römerbrief (The Epistle to the Romans), *radically questioning current theology. In 1921–33 was professor successively at Göttingen, Münster, Bonn. Under Nazi rule he helped found the resistant "Confessing Church" and was chief author of the Barmen Declaration. Refusing forced oath of allegiance, in 1933 he left Germany to become professor at Basel. A major theologian of our time. Hoped to lead Christian thought back to revelation and prophetic teaching, away from overinfluence by philosophy and science. Believes in transcendence of God utterly beyond power of perverted human reason or feeling to reach. Has repudiated all forms of natural theology. Anchors all authentic knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.*

"God is on the throne. In the existence of Jesus Christ, the fact that God speaks, gives, orders, comes absolutely first—that man hears, receives, obeys, can and must only follow this first act."

The question of contemporaneousness runs like a thread through all the faith-fact story. This is sharply apparent in the Bultmann excerpt just finished, which comes to a climax in showing that the "once-for-all" character of salvation lies neither in timeless truths nor in a past event of history, but in the act of God—the Word—that is able to renew our faith "every morning."

Whatever its character, for each of these thinkers faith moves between deep convictions and disturbing uncertainties, between what wells up immediately and what is experienced more indirectly, between an act of the centered self and stimulus from outside. Faith always seems to involve something universal and enduring, but also something particular and changing. Here one is brought face to face with a perennial problem of philosophy and theology, so forcefully expressed for the modern mind by Lessing.

For many the leap across the gulf between faith and fact leaves fact on the hither side. Again and again the "lack of contemporaneousness"

Barth's writings include the multiple volumes of the Church Dogmatics. *Briefer expressions of his more recent thought may be found in* The Humanity of God, *John Newton Thomas, trans. (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1960) and* Evangelical Theology: An Introduction *(New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963).*

makes a great broad ditch for the thinker. Centuries are not the point. It is separation—were it only last week—from direct experience that tells. If the experience that gives rise to faith, that becomes faith, that *is* faith—if this experience is not deeply our own, faith loses its root for us, becomes something quite different. It slides into vague superficial belief or feeling, perhaps a rationalization. Or mere habit, so repellent to Kierkegaard.

Barth comes at this question of contemporaneousness in an uncompromising way. In our selection he shows how the Word of God given to the world in Christ is again and again rendered living and contemporaneous for us. It comes *through* the secondary media that history provides. This is not simply something inert, like a stone that remains the same no matter how you move it around, or how long before you see it again. The Word of God is life, is God himself speaking. It is an *act* of God, a step—not simply (as with Bultmann's rejected "timeless truths") the inertia of staying the same. By this step God addresses us concretely through the Church's proclamation.

This "speaking" is contemporaneous with Christ himself, for it *is* Christ. Christ is the Word. Our experience of him and what has happened in the past are wedded in God's act rather than in our human intuitions or critical grasp of historical facts. The inward awareness of the life of faith and the outward testimony of the Church are joined by God's gracious power. In that living moment God acts, takes the step to us, every time we encounter him and for each of us anew.

In order to draw the reader after him into this realization, Barth begins with a description of the various historical "times" involved in receiving Jesus and his message. There is the time of Jesus himself. There is the secondary time of prophets before him and apostles after, who speak with their own sure witness, yet constitute secondhandedness for us. Then there is the tertiary time of the Church in any period, who takes upon herself the witness of prophets and apostles, and the Word of God that is Christ, in undying obligation to proclaim it.

Barth notes in some detail this variety of persons disposed around Christ and their relation to him, including our own. Here he makes a careful digression in order to disagree with Lessing's too easy version of contemporaneousness. As if we ourselves were fit to measure Christ and the apostles and dispose of their value, size up the "gross and net." This is far from the same as being *told* something. When we hear the word of God, we are *told*. If we go by Lessing's version, Barth says, the Church indeed speaks the last word as the "heiress" of history, simply because she comes last. But she speaks it alone, turned in on herself. If she is not to be alone, then we must abide by the human distinctions of the "times" just as they are. Contemporaneousness cannot be arrived

at by "leveling up" the differences between Jesus, the apostles, the Church, and you and me. We must not imagine we can "humanize" the Word of God, by trying to bring Scripture and revelation alike under our own very modest powers of judgment.

Contemporaneousness can only be realized as an expression of the fact that the Word of God is itself God's *act*. Thus it has nothing to do fundamentally with problems of historical understanding. Something *happens* where the Word is proclaimed that cannot be brought about merely by interpretive skills. The truth is, those who saw Jesus with their own eyes were able to recognize the Christ, not by means of any such skills or training, but only through revelation, election, calling, setting apart, "new birth"—whatever name one may give to it. The apostles, yes, and prophets too, before Christ came, spoke not only *about* Christ, but *in* Christ. The word of Scripture is the word of the prophets and apostles as witnesses to Christ. As such it simultaneously utters the Word of Christ himself. The same step, from one "time" to another, occurs "when Church proclamation becomes real proclamation, i.e., God's Word; because in it Holy Scripture, and in Holy Scripture Christ himself, comes to expression."

Barth ends by going back to explain the word "contingent" in the opening sentence of our excerpt. He used it, he says, to emphasize the nature of contemporaneousness as an act, an event (not the simple duration of unchanging truths). That event is made up of two elements, and for all the various kinds of "time" they are the same. There is the Word of God as originally spoken "there and then." And there is the particular vital import it has to a particular man "here and now." When God truly speaks, when the step is really taken (and this must not be watered away into mere notions of general fixed truths), the "there and then" of God's Word becomes the "here and now"—spoken to us exactly as it was spoken earlier. We are *told*.

This is Barth's description of how the Word of God reaches into the human heart—. He contributes to the whole faith-fact story in highly provocative and stimulating ways. We shall have to focus sharply on this issue in order to know what to highlight from the great bulk of his other works.[1] In all his writings he views the realm of fact from a consistently Christocentric position. History itself, he tries to show, is to be understood as a form of human experience included under God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Beside this single center and criterion of faith all else is relative. In Christ we find the "real" as opposed to the "phenomenal" man. The beginning point for faith thinking is not a Jesus of

[1] For the exposition that follows, see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1960), Vol. III, Part 2, sec. 44.

"brute fact," and history is not the kind of given condition whose meaning for faith can be assumed. Only from a Christological center, and in the light of the story of divine-human activity, is the true character of history (*Geschichte*) disclosed, as compared with mere condition (*Zustand*).

Kant saw the faith-fact issue, we may recall, in terms of a prior distinction between basic religion and faith (what one believes). This is a distinction between the inner sense of morality and haphazard circumstance. Inner moral law had for him the invulnerable, intuitive quality of faith itself for some other thinkers. Barth's prior assumption is not human nature in general, but the very specific existence of the "one man Jesus." In spite of important differences, his procedure has some affinities with Kant. He sets the problem in the context of an overarching revelational and Christologized history. This is what is meant by *Geschichte*. The realm of fact, to be sure—of general human powers and relationships (*Zustand*)—is involved in life. But it only becomes significant as it is caught up into the history of Christ and the movement between God and man that is centered there.

Against this background Barth can speak of history as a type of personal encounter. It involves a relationship with "Otherness" that breaks through the boundary limits of one's own existence, and then establishes them anew. This very way of viewing the nature of history is clarified in Jesus, the authentically historic being. He is the man wholly "for God" and "for other men." Hence he has his "being as a history" in the truly original sense. The reference here is to Jesus' reality in God. His action takes place in God's holy history. He is united with God's own sovereignty, purpose, and divinity. He works on behalf of God's kingdom and of man, as God's covenant partner.

Barth also stresses the Jesus of kerygma, known in the obedience of faith. This is "real" history. The Jesus of neutral scientific abstraction is "phenomenal" history, not necessarily to be excluded, but speaking of God only when illumined through the "eyes of faith." Faith itself is born strictly through the quickening power of the Spirit of Christ.[2] But this power does not represent a duality, a mere parallel to the stuff of outward history. The Christ of faith *is* the Jesus of fact in the fullest possible sense. This is the *kind* of fact that matters.

Our selection from Barth is an excerpt from his *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, under the successive major and minor headings: "The Doctrine of the Word of God" and "The Nature of the Word of God." The latter

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[2] Note the affinity here with Martin Kähler's type of faith positivism in handling the faith-fact issue. See the section of Bultmann, above, for a brief summary of Kähler's thought, pp. 118–120.

is section 5 of that volume and our excerpt is a subtitle under it. We have here about half the passage under the subtitle. This volume of Barth's work was published in German in 1932.

(From Karl Barth, "God's Language as God's Act," *Church Dogmatics,* Vol. I, Part I, *The Doctrine of the Word of God,* G. T. Thomson, trans. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936], pp. 164–170.)

3. GOD'S LANGUAGE AS GOD'S ACT

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1. That God's word is God's act means first its contingent contemporaneousness. The meaning of this is as follows: One time is the time of the direct, original utterance of God himself in His revelation, the time of Jesus Christ—(which according to John 8:56 was also and already the time of Abraham)—the time of that which prophets and apostles heard, in order to attest it—another time is the time of this testimony, the time of prophecy and the apostolate, the time of Peter upon whom Christ builds His Church, the time when the Canon arose as the concrete counterpart in which the Church receives her norm for all times—and again another time is this or that time of the Church herself, the time of derivative proclamation, related to the words of the prophets and apostles and regulated by them. These are different times, distinguished not only by the difference in periods and in contents, not only by the remoteness of centuries and the gap in humanity between centuries and millennia, but distinguished by the varied attitudes of God to men. Jesus Christ was not less a true man than the prophets and apostles, but in virtue of His unity with God He stood absolutely over against them as a master over against his slaves. The Biblical witnesses as men, even as religious men, held no fundamentally marked precedence over the later teachers of the Church or even over us or even over the teachers and leaders of other religions. Yet they stood and stand, in their office as witnesses, in an utterly unique and peculiar position in the Church compared with all the rest of us. Again, however fundamental the essential equality between our existence and that of Christ and that of the apostles and which at least distinguishes us from them, our situation in Scripture to revelation and again through the intervening experience of the Church, in which we have the advantage of the prophets and apostles and which at least distinguishes us from them, our situation in the Church is a third and quite special situation. It is that, the variety in order of before and after, above and below, which makes the times of the Word of God so varied. Three times it is a matter of an utterance of the Word of God by the mouth of man. But only twice, in the case

of the Biblical witnesses and of ourselves, is it also primarily a matter of submitting to an utterance, and only once, in our own case, of an indirect submission to it mediated through the Bible. This varying position in God's order distinguishes these three times in a way not otherwise characteristic of man's times, a way in which they differ only here, in which only the times of the Word of God differ. This lack of contemporaneousness may naturally be dissolved by disregarding the variety of these three times in God's order, through consideration and exposition of them, not as times of the Word of God, but immanently, i.e., merely by assessing the variety of the periods and their human contents as such. In that case the assessment of this variety need not only form no hindrance to a direct insight into the continuity and unity of the times, to an insight into our contemporaneousness with Christ and all His saints—rather it is the first thing to make this grasp possible and provable, by teaching us to see and regard man in the past, were his name Jeremiah or Jesus or Paul or Luther, as a fellow-man and at the same time, of course, to criticise him, yet to esteem and love him as well, in short to keep company with him as a comrade of one and the same time.

That is the way which more recent Protestant theology, after overcoming the great crisis of the Enlightenment's split with history, has taken and still takes in all its typical representatives. People believed then and still believe that in this way, delivered from the stiff antitheses of the Old Church and her theology, they have discovered, in a perfectly new and now for the first time correct way, "revelation by God in history." The epoch-making name in this connection is, so far as I see and understand the matter, the name of Lessing. "The foul, wide ditch" (between the Bible and us) about which he has said in a well-known passage ("The Proof of the Spirit and of Power," *Theol. Schr.* ed. Gross, II 2, p. 13) that with all his goodwill he could not jump over it, was not and, for the author of *Laocoön,* could not be the general problem of historical understanding, leaping over the gap of centuries and the variety of their humanity. This leap Lessing, and after him Herder and Schleiermacher and the rest, down to A. Ritschl and Harnack, Lagarde and Troeltsch, could very well take, and take it with increasing excellence and skill. And likewise Lessing's other famous saying, that "accidental truths of history can never prove the necessary truths of reason," need not be turned into banality as though by truth of history we were to understand the special concrete empirical truth of an historical datum as such, and by truth of reason the timeless truth of mathematical and philosophical axioms. In this antithesis of the unique and the universal, the empirical and the rational Kant's philosophy of religion still moves, but certainly not Lessing's any longer, in this respect much the more modern of the two. Lessing recognises perfectly well a proof of Christianity by history. But it must be "the proof of the Spirit and of power"; i.e. history proves us

no truth, so long as it is "accidental truth of history," truth merely told us by others but not as such "felt" and "experienced" by ourselves. It becomes "necessary truth of reason," i.e. it becomes for us necessary and real truth, when and so far as it is "felt" and "experienced" as such by us, experienced in the way the "paralytic feels the beneficent shock of the electric spark." "Religion is not true because the evangelists and apostles taught it, but they taught it because it is true. By its inner truth must Scriptural traditions be explained, and all the Scriptural traditions in the world cannot give it inner truth if it does not possess it" (*Frag. eines Ungen, op. cit.* II, 1, p. 261: *Axiomata, op. cit.* II 2, p. 122. The apologetic use of the concept of "experience" is already found, according to K. Aner, *Die Theologie der Lessingzeit,* 1929 p. 148f. in the sermons of Abbot J. Fr. W. Jerusalem, 1745). And this inner truth Lessing clearly holds to be an entity thoroughly accessible to and apprehensible by us; as to its presence we can be judges in virtue of our feeling and experience. Therefore, he appeals from Luther's writings to Luther's spirit (*Anti-Göze, op. cit.* II 2, p. 140), from the letter of the Bible to the spirit of the Bible (*Axiomata, op. cit.* II 2, p. 112), from the recounted miracles to the still "constantly continuing miracle of religion itself" (*Eine Duplik, op. cit.* II 2, p. 33), finally from the Christian religion to the religion of Christ (*Die Religion Christi, op. cit.* II 3, p. 448f.). "No one in Hamburg will ever again wish to dispute with me the utter difference between gross and net" (*Axiomata, op. cit.* II 2, p. 108). "Historical words are the vehicle of the prophetic word" (*op. cit.* p. 112). Such was Lessing's obstacle and such his conquest of the obstacle. It was the regular and, as he rightly saw, insuperable lack of contemporaneousness between Christ, the apostles, and ourselves that disturbed him, and that therefore he let drop in favour of an immanent and therefore also of an immanently superable lack of contemporaneousness. Henceforth all the more living spirits, in contrast to the Enlightenment and to Kant, found it no longer difficult or objectionable to explain revelation as history and history as revelation.

But if we drop the orderly variety of the three times, then however loudly and cordially we may continue to talk about revelation, its concreteness and historicity, and however illuminatingly and practically everything may take shape, we must drop the concept of the Word of God itself. Where we are in the position to do away with our lack of contemporaneousness with Christ and the apostles by placing ourselves on the same level as them, or them on the same level as us, in order by participating in the same prophetic spirit as them and by possessing in our own feeling the measure of inner truth to discuss with them the gross and net value of their words; where therefore contemporaneousness rests upon the hypothesis of a merely quantitative difference between those there and us here, there the concept of the Word of God is bound to be humanised in such a way that it is no wonder people prefer to use it comparatively seldom and as (so to speak) a guidepost; indeed the wonder rather is they don't prefer to eliminate it alto-

gether in so many words. However seriously they may be taken as such, the differences inherent in history are not sufficient to justify a serious use of the concept "Word of God." For, fundamentally, the assessment of these differences does not amount to our letting ourselves be told something. Therefore in the region of these differences there cannot be any utterance of the Word of God. Within these differences there is only our togetherness with Christ and the apostles, a togetherness the norm and conditions of which, with all respect for the greatness and vitality of history, we, the living, who therefore are in the right, finally and ultimately set up and handle. The Church of the present, however historically she may feel and think, in that case speaks the last word as heiress and interpretress of history, and, without the Word of God in the serious sense of the term, stands solitary by herself and pointed in on herself. If we insist that the concept of the Word of God means precisely that the Church does not stand solitary by herself and pointed in on herself, then we must abide by the orderly distinction between the times, and the contemporaneousness of present-day proclamation with Scripture and with revelation can certainly not be regarded as a thing to be introduced by us levelling up this distinction, by incorporating Scripture and revelation in the life of humanity. It can only be regarded as an expression of the fact that the Word of God is itself God's act. Thus, directly, it has nothing to do with the general problem of historical understanding. Of course the question of some sort of historical understanding always arises when the Word of God is manifest to us in its contemporaneousness. But it is not that sort of historical understanding as such which signifies the hearing, and is the basis of the proclamation, of the Word of God. Where the Word of God is heard and proclaimed, something happens which in spite of all interpretative skill cannot be brought about by interpretative skill.

The Biblical witnesses too had a definite relationship of historical understanding with Jesus Christ (*ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα χριστόν* [we once regarded Christ from a human point of view], II Cor. 5:16). But in this relationship it was not through the power immanent in this relationship, that they came to recognise Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

> And so certainly not through the power of Lessing's "feeling" and "experience," *σάρξ καὶ αἷμα οὐκ ἀπεκάλυψέν σοι* [flesh and blood has not revealed this to you] (Matt. 16:17). Those who apprehend the light come into the world, who behold the Kingdom of God, do not do so in virtue of their earthly birth (John 1:13, 3:3f.). The Father hath hidden the mystery of the Son from the "wise and prudent" (Matt. 11:25)—i.e. surely, from the judgment based upon an inner truth already known to man.

Rather this knowledge is referred in OT and NT to election, revela-

tion, calling, setting apart, new birth—clear concepts which, so to speak, shatter the immanence of the historical connection from within, so far as God Himself is the subject of the action indicated in them, so far as God's "good pleasure" (εὐδοκία, Matt. 11:26; Gal. 1:15; Eph. 1:9) as the altogether external truth first creates and posits the altogether inner truth as such in and by the free action described in these concepts: apart from all historical connections, though these undeniably exist; in these connections but not through them. We should not regard these concepts as subsequent explanations of an event really and essentially immanent. They do not explain, they say, how it is primary. It is rather all the immanent interpretations of these concepts that here constitute subsequent explanations. We can only regard them as signifiying free acts of God in the sense of the Biblical authors, or we do not understand them at all. They assert that without the removal of the difference the time of Christ is made contemporary with the time of the prophets and apostles by the free act of God.

> The prophets prophesy of Christ and the apostles proclaim Him, neither of them as reporters, but both as witnesses, who speak not only "about Christ" but "in Christ," not because they have experienced Christ as one might also experience Plato, but because it pleased God ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί [to reveal his son to me] (Gal. I:16).

The Word of Scripture in its quite different time area, with its quite different time content compared with the Word of revelation, now reverts to its orderly position; it is now described as the Word of the prophets and apostles, and as such, as the witness to Christ and in its subordination to the Word of Christ, it simultaneously utters the Word of Christ Himself.

It is the same step from one time to another understandable only as the act of God, when Church proclamation becomes real proclamation, i.e. God's Word, because in it Holy Scripture, and in Holy Scripture Christ Himself comes to expression. Once more we have here and must have here a definite relation of historical understanding, with all its relevant components, from philological analysis to skill in what is called "getting the feel" of the author. Proclamation is only possible in this relation of understanding, just as prophecy and the apostolate only existed in a definite relation of understanding. But in this relation proclamation of the Word of God is achieved not through the individual components of this relation or the sum of them, and therefore, e.g., neither through philological acuteness nor through the most talented and refined feel of the author, but purely and simply through the power of the Biblical Word itself, which now makes a place for itself in a quite different period and becomes the content of this period, because in

proclamation the stage is held not by Paul the religious personality, but by Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ, and in him by Jesus Christ Himself. Because the Word of God is this act in this step from revelation to Scripture and to Church proclamation, i.e. in the full, strict distinction of times, it is contemporaneous—Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς ἐχθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτός [Jesus Christ the same yesterday and tomorrow] (Heb. 13:8).

We said "contingently contemporaneous," just to emphasise the character of this contemporaneousness as an act, an event. We would have to speak of a twofold contingency, in so far as our concern, as much in the relation between revelation and Holy Scripture as in that between Holy Scripture and proclamation, is invariably both with a contingent *illic et tunc* [there and then] from the standpoint of God who speaks, and also with a contingent *hic et nunc* [here and now] from the standpoint of man who hears. Of a step from the one to the other we have indeed spoken in both relations. This "step" should not be volatilised into the general truth of a fixed or continuous relation between the three forms. We are really concerned with a step, which has reality only as this and that and the other step, i.e. as a contingent act. The problem of the Word of God consists in the fact that to this particular man to-day through the proclamation of this other particular man by means of this particular Bible text this particular manifestation of God is imparted, that a particular *illic et tunc* becomes a particular *hic et nunc.* The problem of the Word of God is thus from time to time a perfectly definite, once-for-all, peculiar problem, and of this problem we must say that it is solved by the Word of God itself, spoken by the mouth of God, being contemporaneous *illic et tunc* and (i.e. exactly as spoken *illic et tunc*) *hic et nunc.*

We become contemporaneous with Christ, but only through God's act. The orderly difference between the "times," between fact and faith, is overcome not only by inner processes, but by God's sovereign freedom and gracious act in his Word, in Jesus Christ. The "proof of the Spirit and of power" is Jesus Christ himself,[3] who in his God-manhood bridges time and eternity, God's historicity and God's divinity. As Barth's writings reiterate, he spans God's eternal election of man, and man's constantly revived decision ("new every morning") to be covenant partner with God and neighbor. Thus the faith-fact issue is posed and handled in terms of the prior unity of Jesus with God's being and purpose. The significance of the historical fact of Jesus is based upon his complete,

[3] Lessing's phrase is appropriate once more; but here understood in terms of radical transcendence and the priority of the divine act in establishing a "proof" in human experience.

radical openness to—or oneness with—God's own being and act. The history of *this man* merges into the history of God's covenantal purpose and activity in relation to all men.

According to Barth, Lessing and many of his successors failed to take the gulf between faith and fact seriously enough. At the same time they took it too seriously. The main thrust of nineteenth-century theology involved a too-easy identification of revelation with history, and vice versa. It was easy to give a passing nod to the apparent chasm between faith and fact and then move quickly to the other side by some convenient bridge of fundamental feeling, experience, ethical truths, inner value-relation, moral archetype, or whatever.

Yet in another sense the gulf was taken too seriously, in Barth's opinion. The gulf is real. Apart from divine revelation, what is accessible to "sight" is precisely the yawning chasm of Lessing. But behind this is the still more fundamental conviction of faith that the bridging has already been accomplished in God's own humanity. Here Barth counters the ethical positivism of a Lessing (or Kant) and the existential positivism of a Kierkegaard and a Bultmann with a kind of revelation-and-grace positivism of his own.

Chapter Six

A FAITH-FACT TYPOLOGY

A typology is an abstract summary whose wording may pinpoint, but cannot fully capture, the living movement of thought and the life behind it. It is a useful tool as a means of review. We have been sparing in our use of labels for the various ideas involved in the faith-fact issue, until the reader could gain some firsthand acquaintance with the sources. Without arguing for too sharp a difference between them, we may now try to define the major possibilities discovered by these thinkers in their effort to resolve the relation of faith to historical fact.

Normally a typology should be concise. But it may be useful to include just here a review of how the frame of mind arose that made possible the first clear expression of a separation between fact and faith. For this sense of separation, of uncertainty or unreliability, affects not only the faith-history story, but both other major themes of the book as well. It began with the discovery of uncertainty at the center of our most cherished Scriptures. This meant loss of the absolute authority of the written word—although it was only gradually admitted or realized. And this in turn had its effect also on our ethics and our sense of truth —indeed, of God—in a way we are only now beginning to appreciate.

1. Faith Marked Off from and Illustrated by Fact

The conspicuous thing about Lessing in this whole connection—what we remember him for—is that he made a vigorous effort to detach faith from historical hazards, even in so venerated a document as the New Testament. Lessing's sharp separation of faith from fact may have been an error, equal to the *faux pas* seen by William Temple in Descartes' separation of the ego from its world. But the faith-fact question has continued to haunt Christian thought.

Lessing saw clearly that "fact" was not something one could build faith on. For him, in that moment, historical fact became almost irrelevant to faith. This was not a case of sour grapes, exactly. He felt in-

stinctively the dignity of faith, and it was not something that should be at the mercy of precarious accident. The things we are "willing to live and die by" should not have to depend on such flux and instability. Nor, he thought, can any mere cluster of details plucked out of this unstable process be a proof of claims of a quite different order of magnitude: as for instance that Christ is the Son of God. Faith is surely related to fact, he saw, but of a different order.

For himself, versions of history could never validate or *prove* faith, could never constitute certainty in it. Fact is individual, particular, subject to change of aspect, subject to melting away entirely. It is ignominious—ignoble almost—to lodge faith in something so unpredictable. Faith concerns what is universal. Perhaps Lessing would have said, rather, that our faith must be *in* something universal, durable, permanently of highest value.

Thus historical fact and faith were marked off, separated, by a great gulf or ditch, until a firm bridge was made by shifting the object of faith so that it could be brought into the present and connected with direct feeling and experience. This is Lessing's solution to the problem of contemporaneousness. It does not prevent him from accepting the life of Jesus on earth or the genuineness of his supposed teachings. If he had seen reason for serious question here, perhaps he would have pushed the matter still further back, like Kant expressing his faith in the teachings themselves almost irrespective of the teacher. But he feels no need to do so. His doubts are the cultural product of his time and are shaped and limited by it. He does not wholly divorce faith from fact, knowing that the "truths of reason" come to us through life, which is history. We do not spin them all out of our insides like the spider. And Lessing still has confidence that a vigorous moral faith can prove its power in and through historical settings. In his famous parable of the rings in *Nathan the Wise,* the advice is given to tolerate the major historical religions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—until one of them proves superior through intrinsic moral force.

It remained for Kant to express a more complete separation of faith from fact, in which not even the expression of moral feeling achieves real historical power. He cannot, of course, ever separate them altogether. But the whole drama of the moral law which he sees inherent in the consciousness of man plays itself out in terms of man's inner life. Historical fact—traditions, doctrines, records handed down—he regards as either corrupt or pure, depending on those who transmit it. There is considerable corruption involved in Christianity. Impurity inhibits our knowledge of the moral principles we would otherwise, in the course of time, discover for ourselves. Even Jesus, in Kant's view, is only—so to speak—an aid to the moral self-discovery of mankind. He gave circula-

tion to many truths which were up to that time unrealized. It is apparent that Kant thinks of this as a device of Providence to hasten the coming of the kingdom—the Church triumphant—whose march, though slow, is in any case inevitable. Strangely enough for a thinker of such rigid morality, Kant is an optimist. He feels sure that man will eventually throw off superstition and logical errors and be able to subject the conditions of his world to his own control.

In outward life—in history—Kant believes we may find *illustrations* of the moral truths we recognize as principles. Jesus is a figure of perfect moral truth—thus an illustration or example to our eyes. But what we perceive in Jesus is really the archetype that is also within ourselves. The archetype is universal, and it is the archetype that has real life. Faith is the response of man to this transcendent, universal thing, which may be mirrored in history but has its own dynamic. The archetype is basic for faith. The concrete life of Jesus only illustrates it.

Here, then, we have faith marked off from fact and merely illustrated by it—coolly and distantly, as it were, in pale colors. Faith is an inner disposition of "natural religion," an awareness of moral law. Once more the object of faith shifts, from Lessing's "teachings of Jesus" to something more successfully invulnerable. For now it is inside man himself and not concrete at all. Incidentally, Kant occasionally switches terms on us, but this should not mislead the reader. He sometimes uses the word "faith" for mere belief in a set of doctrines. But he discusses under natural religion and the moral law what we elsewhere see as faith: the adherence of man's spirit and will to something high and universal, the best he knows. This deep adherence, some Christians were suddenly discovering, could not be to mere "fact."

We have spent a long time on this first item in our typology, for the theme recurs and is extremely important in modern Christian life. The apparent gulf between faith and fact assails the thinking of believers everywhere and poses problems to which they often have no answer. The resulting skepticism among many people about the facts of Christianity has driven some to humanism or scientific atheism. If the man of faith is ever to have at his disposal the answers he needs, he must face this "gulf" truly for himself.

Of others, after Kant, concerned with this separation we may mention Strauss, who drove to its logical conclusion Kant's transcendent idea. He inverted the interest in history so that now fact becomes less important as an illustration of moral power than as something which may itself be *transformed into* rational idea. Like Schweitzer, he is inclined to say of the God-man: the important thing is that the *idea* is now alive in the world. Thus he turns his eyes from any too insistent view of the God-man himself.

The Romantics also contributed to an outlook on history as "illustrative but not constitutive," with emphasis on man's spontaneity and freedom behind the historical façade. Schleiermacher reflects something of this mood, with his focus on lived experience, but belongs rather to another type. At times, as in Harnack, the sense of separation leads to search for an abiding "essence" of Christianity. This is sometimes discovered by moving through the changing to the unchanging, through the relative and ideological to the universal, through Hellenized theology to the "simple gospel."

Faith separated from historical fact and only slightly related to it is one tremendous category of thought brought to light here. Christians have given it full attention in trying to face the implications of their modern culture. No scientist who turns his back on any real truth, however small, and tries to ignore its relevance to his thinking, is worth his salt. The same may be said of the Christian. Whatever the truth—certainly not small—contained in the complex situation that gave rise to our first type of answer, it must be faced, and the answers will not all be the same.

2. *Faith in Value-Relation to Fact*

Another solution is that of a "value-relation" of faith to fact. This involves a recognition of the different spheres of faith and fact, indeed sometimes an almost parallel life of the two. Here, however, faith attributes value to fact—sees value in certain kinds of clusters of fact so far as they are known. Inversely also, at times it *imparts* value to fact, or establishes a relation with hidden value already there. Nevertheless, without faith the value cannot be seen nor contact established with it. Where no such value is perceived by faith, the empty fact—so to speak—is unimportant, or only of very secondary interest.

The background for this type of answer runs back, one might say, to the efforts of liberal theologians to develop new critical approaches to the Scriptures. They tried to apply positivist methods to the "quest of the historical Jesus." But this involves the assumption that one can move behind the dimensions of faith to discover a kernel of reliable, uninterpreted fact that will satisfy the critical historian. It is an impulse that comes into view at various times in our story. Oddly enough or perhaps so obviously that it is almost embarrassing to state, the results are unrewarding. The more the historical task was defined in terms of "brute fact," with effort made to locate every event logically on an historical timetable, the more any pattern or meaning dropped out of the picture. The factual record thus became insignificant by deliberate reduction to its simplest external elements, without relation to each other or to tradi-

tion. In such avoidance of meaning, the relevance of fact for faith became increasingly doubtful.

This was an effort to find again some sort of invulnerability for faith by a search for fact behind the conventional terms of faith itself. It involved a certain hope that by this means timeless certainty could be arrived at in the very language of the critical historiographer. The effort was soon shown by such men as Kähler and Schweitzer to be sterile and devoid of any helpful result. Like other clear-sighted thinkers all along, Kähler reiterated that faith could not be derived from fact, no matter how piled on (echoes of Kierkegaard!). We are driven back again to Lessing's painfully clear knowledge that these two things are of a different order. Faith does not really spring from fact.

But value and significance could not long be eliminated from fact. Dilthey and others countered the efforts at neutral historicism—often peculiarly unneutral—by a quite different view of historical consciousness.[1] He saw it as incapable of neutrality, as empathetic and valuing. For him it is intentional and relational in its very nature. To think in terms of isolated fact is well-nigh impossible. This rare bird is no more real, in effect, than the Cartesian ego in isolation from its world. Both exist only in relation. There is no "fact" apart from its content, its relation to other facts, and its value or significance for some knowing subject. The framework in which the historian sees history, in itself sets its own norms. All this is more apparent today than it was a century ago.

Ritschl's understanding of value in relation to fact may be seen in his awareness of the difference and yet interrelation between the Jesus of fact and the Christ of value for the Christian community. The redemption that faith recognizes in Christ, with all its consequences for mankind in trust, love, freedom, and forgiveness, attaches quite simply to the factual Jesus of history. This is reality in depth, perceived by faith. Man's own worth receives definition by it.

So also with Herrmann, for whom the personal disclosure of the inner life of Jesus comes through all the varied details of the "factual" account. This quite irrespective of the changing judgment of history. Again and again there is a moment when it speaks *through*. This value-relation, gradually formed, is deep and immediate, an intimate certainty unshaken by external historical waverings. Such clarity of inner knowledge is given to individuals in God's own times, as we are ready for it, and it comes *through* temporal knowledge despite all its variations or limitations.

We have already seen a similar duality in Schleiermacher's "indispens-

[1] William Dilthey (1833–1911) was professor of philosophy successively at Basel, Kiel, Breslau, and Berlin. He is best known for his attempt to write a critique of historical reason that would parallel the three critiques of Immanuel Kant.

able third," the God-consciousness that is to undergird so far as possible all outward life, thus imparting to it value and content. All these men recognize a certain benefit in impersonal historical studies. They clear away from the figure of Jesus traditional encumbrances distracting to faith. Like Bultmann these thinkers all believe in biblical criticism "in order to make room" for faith to be genuine, rather than a convulsively tight grasping after fact.

3. *Faith and Fact in Paradox*

Kierkegaard gives classic expression to this view. Fact is fact and faith is faith. Between the two lies the abyss confronted by Lessing—nor is it so easily bridged. The position of faith and fact is neither rapport nor parallel, but paradox. They meet only in the moment of passionate decision in which man himself, facing and accepting the paradox of the God-man, finds his authentic existence. Thus Kierkegaard anticipates some of the moods and tendencies of our own century. Here are clear suggestions, both of its flourishing existentialism and of our neo-orthodox stress on the transcendence and freedom of God even in his revelation.

Indeed, faith is at its most intense precisely when coupled with uncertainty in the objective world—thrown into the dizziness of freedom and the subjective realms of inwardness. This is how Kierkegaard is able to make his famous statement that faith requires only the barest biblical assertion that God became man in Jesus Christ. The statement does not necessarily imply Docetism,[2] or lack of interest in Jesus of Nazareth. It does emphasize that faith and fact are related only paradoxically to each other. No amount of historical detail in itself can alter this.

In what does the paradox consist? In the coming of God to man in Jesus Christ. In knowledge of the eternal, obtained through the finite. In the leap toward what cannot reasonably be known. In redemption of the finite and ordinary so as to partake of the eternal. Here we are at once in touch with paradox, with "the absurd." Many aspects of the Christian faith show this strange element of contradiction: this going out into uncertainty which finds the core of ultimate certainty in it.

Bultmann has given modern form to the paradox between faith and fact. For him our relation to Jesus holds a double possibility: the existential (*geschichtlich*) and/or the objectively historical (*historisch*). He neither argues that faith springs directly from fact nor tries to separate one from the other. As we have seen, in an updated Lutheran way he approves of historical research on the side of fact in order to allow faith to be real

[2] The heresy of supposing Jesus to be a divine phantom, or if substantial, then of supernatural substance.

faith. The way to their (paradoxical) unity is through authentic human existence. Hence the free decision of faith leans upon the grace of God rather than works, and the individual is turned toward divine faithfulness rather than meritorious obedience.

4. Faith and Fact United Beneath or Beyond Themselves

This outlook breaks with the others at a fundamental point. To begin with, there is no longer an initial assumption of separation between faith and fact. Here the question is posed and handled on the basis of an already existing deeper order of reality. That is, before we are ever confronted by the apparent discrepancies between faith and fact, their roots go back together to a basic oneness in the purposes of God. In this framework the issue itself is different. The certainty of faith derives from something deeper than, or beyond, itself. Fact, too, is grounded in something more enduring, less haphazard, than either the knowing subject or its historical object.

This does not mean that knowledge of Jesus in his concrete factualness is suddenly unimportant. Rather, change itself and the relativity of historical events and knowledge are no longer a threat. In a sense, knowledge of fact is absorbed into another knowledge: that of faith. This is given in the very midst of historical change and derives its certainty from something deeper or beyond.

Schleiermacher puts it in terms of piety, absolute God-consciousness. The experience of fundamental dependence, of being in relation to God, cuts under thought and action, faith and fact, alike. Religious experience has an integrity of its own, even while it lives in and through such expressions and is given concreteness by them. We may see this in the way God-consciousness can permeate conscious self-awareness, yet is not at all reducible to it. Schleiermacher's view is that Christianity is a monotheistic form of general religious awareness in mankind. Here religious experience is related to the redemption accomplished in Jesus of Nazareth. Wherever God-consciousness is stimulated and renewed, there faith and fact find their unity in deeper ground.

For Barth, the question posed by Lessing turns in upon itself. No longer is it a matter of how the "accidental" truths of history can prove the inescapable truths of "reason." No longer do we ask whether knowledge of fact can ever give us the certainty essential to faith. For the question assumes a separation, a difference, between present man and the location of historical life and events on the stream of time. Barth, like Schleiermacher, deals with the faith-fact issue from the standpoint of a fundamental unity. But here a "general awareness" is replaced by revelation. The prior unity and certainty of faith lie in God's sovereign free-

dom and grace, which enter into the life of humanity in Jesus of Nazareth. Faith regards *fact*—the event of Jesus—as the disclosure of God's intention and covenant to be with man in his concrete temporal activity (fact again). This divine purpose is rooted in God's eternal life and decision.

Schleiermacher and Barth agree in assuming a ground for life and thought that is behind or beyond both faith and fact. For both thinkers, Jesus is important for faith because he is caught up in, or open to, this deeper, prior order of reality and meaning. But the two thinkers diverge in crucial ways. Schleiermacher starts with a description of God-conciousness as something uniquely given in experience, and moves to a statement of redemption as focused in Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps unintentionally, this tends to subordinate the Christian faith to a more universal religious consciousness, however in need of refocusing through the historic person of Jesus. Fact, then, has this value of focus, or refocus, for a faith that is grounded in the God-relation with an awareness of utter dependence.

Barth reverses the order. In his thought the starting point is Jesus of Nazareth and the freedom given in him by the covenant. In that one life, rather than any universal religious consciousness, we perceive the prior reality and intention of God. The fact of Jesus is significant for faith because he himself is involved in God's own reality and intention for man. And faith and fact are alike made relative by the certainty—through revelation—that in Jesus Christ, God has declared himself man's covenant partner.

Chapter Seven

FAITH AND FACT: THE DEVELOPING STORY

THE CULTURAL SETTING

To the extent that there was ever a real "medieval synthesis"— not to mention the earlier centuries of Christianity—*fact was subordinated to faith* in an orderly scheme including reason and revelation, nature and grace. Perhaps it would be clearer to say that it was *assumed* that historical fact not only bore out the explicit terms of our faith quite closely and directly, but it seemed the very source of faith. Because of the facts of the New Testament, we had faith. We also had faith *in* those facts, as we believed them to be: in Jesus himself, in his teachings, and in the story of his life. If fact was subordinate in that long period, it was because this assumption was so all-embracing that any doubt about it was never really allowed to come to the surface. Only in this sense was fact subordinate to faith, for no real confrontation took place.

The keen sense of historical fact as we now know it has been fortified in modern times by systematic studies of concrete evidence in a world where printing, records of every kind, libraries, communications, and general literacy lay a great many things open to the student and the public. Our sharpened sense of historical fact did not exist in that earlier world—or only obscurely, surrounded by enormous hazy margin of rumor and conjecture. Those margins are still uncomfortably large in our own time and with all our advantages. However, this does not alter the picture for Lessing's day, when the old, rigidly hierarchical view was breaking up. We have seen that three strands of influence combined with Lessing's personal interests to make him the first to voice very clearly a rejection of the ancient view. One was an absolute determination to think for oneself rather than accept spoon-fed doctrines. The second was the beginning of down-to-earth, scholarly biblical criticism, in which Lessing was closely involved. And perhaps a third effective influence from the Age of Reason was the almost self-consciously strong scorn of superstition. This now began to grope uneasily in the direction of the miracles and even the resurrection of Jesus.

As soon as the facts connected with faith became at all clearly doubtful, faith—a much bigger, more fundamental thing somehow than any factual version of its content—had to begin to find another home. It could not rest in simple, accepted accounts of fact any more. Whatever their truth, whatever the truth of Jesus' life as he lived it, that factual, detailed truth itself cannot be known with any absolute certainty. This was a tremendous jolt, of which the consequences are still unrolling like a tidal wave after two hundred years. It gradually caused a rearrangement of the relation of faith to recorded fact in the minds and feelings of thoughtful Christian people throughout the world.

The tempo of this adaptation to culture, and the assimilation of what it means and implies, has been uneven. For a long time the great majority of Christian laymen (ministers, too) were virtually untouched by it. Indeed, it would probably be possible at this very hour to find, somewhere in the Christian world, sincere representatives of almost every point of view so far mentioned in this book, though of course in different numbers from earlier times. We do notice a marked chronological development, a sequence of reactions and repercussions in point of view. And we shall indicate some of the likelier possibilities for the future. But the various major stances or combinations evolved in our story of the effort to find a truer relation between faith and fact—these are all living elements still in the Christian experience.

As we look back we detect a kind of inner integrity and orderly development. In spite of unresolved issues the story has a certain roundedness to it. In some ways the argument has come full circle. We are not suggesting that "idea" moves with Hegelian majesty from thesis and antithesis to synthesis, as though dynamic power were somehow resident within reason itself. What we have found, rather, is the unfolding logic of a growing understanding. This has been shaped both by responsiveness to its ancient center in Jesus Christ and by concrete experience in changing cultural contexts.

Lessing wrote in a period when the issue of "fact" was increasingly visible as such. Partly this was a matter of language. As the language of fact became more and more earth-bound, the relation to the idiom of faith became increasingly problematic. Lessing also shared a cultural bias which preferred the tidiness of ideas such as "universal reason" to the accidental, random character of factual knowledge. We must not overlook either the cultural context that makes his position understandable or the creative impetus here given to Christian thought. There have been many lively debates and adjustments and readjustments in the development from Lessing to Barth. These have been instrumental in renewing and clarifying faith's relation to its historic center from within the fluctuating social scene.

Kant's stress on a moral law in man speaks to a time when there was widespread search for a legitimate place for religion within the bounds of self-confident reason.

Schleiermacher's effort to show how faith and fact are ultimately united constitutes an "apology"—a defense of religion—to the "cultured despisers" of his day.

Kierkegaard's paradoxical relation between faith and fact confronts a culture where "being a Christian" was taken for granted, in what he describes as an oozing together of faith and society. He shocked his contemporaries and blew their reasoning to shreds.

Kähler's drive to see faith as rooted in faith rather than "bare fact" is a protest against biblical criticism that obscures Scripture instead of freeing its potential power in life and Church preaching.

Herrmann's view of a faith-value relation to fact is part of the Church's efforts in his day to see how religion supports the value of man as against nature, in the face of naturalist dehumanizing tendencies.

Other, more current ways of handling the question must also be understood within the cultural setting. Certainly Bultmann and Barth are far more intelligible when read in the context of the faith-culture interaction. Bultmann's solution is in terms of a kind of existential positivism. Fact remains mere fact and thus in general impervious to faith. But fact can be seized, so to speak, through existential decision, in openness to the dynamic Word heard in the preaching of the message. This speaks to a culture which has lost its conscious roots in the past and no longer thinks with the aid of timeless myths, but needs meaning for present existence.

Barth's option is a type of revelational positivism. Faith and fact are united beyond their contradictions, by grace, or the divine act. Only thus does one become "contemporaneous" with the "time of Jesus Christ," the historic center. Barth is much closer to his predecessors than the usual stereotypes suggest. His way of meeting the issue speaks to a culture which brought forth Hitler. That culture moved all too easily from an experiential basis in theology to what Barth has called an idolatrous allegiance to other lords than the one Lord Jesus Christ. Barth's repudiation of natural theology and any form of experiential ground for theological thought must be seen, in part, against the social background that resulted in the German Confessing Church and the Barmen Declaration.

HISTORICAL UNCERTAINTY AND THE SECURITY OF FAITH

We have said that the faith-fact story has a quality of being rounded out, of coming full circle. Partly because of the way this was achieved by men like Bultmann and Barth, still other possibilities are now beginning to emerge. We may see this more clearly by focusing on the implications of historical uncertainty for the security of faith. At the point where we

took up the story there were often passionate wrangles about scriptural interpretation—even to the point of killing in the streets. After Lessing's time, doubt about the authenticity of accounts of Jesus' life is more clearly expressed. This uncertainty strikes to the heart of simple faith. At the core of faith there has to be something true, certain, sure—it is a commitment involving "heart and soul and mind and strength." Faith cannot be given wholeheartedly to anything that is shaky or requires reservations. As a result—as we have seen—there has been an ongoing search for a type of assurance for faith that will be less fluctuating than the probabilities of historical fact.

One very common solution is to find an anchor for faith in present experience rather than past history. In various ways this describes the direction taken by some of the chief contributors to our story. We have witnessed the discovery of certainty in the continuing spirit and power of the teachings of Jesus (Lessing); in a moral archetype of life, regulated by the pure and reasonable intention to do good (Kant), or in the feeling of unqualified dependence upon a power beyond oneself (Schleiermacher). Buttressed by such directly experienced supports, faith can be understood as having its historic center in Jesus of Nazareth, even though the factual details of his life are open to question.

Another solution was found in the way we are able to discover and realize value for ourselves. This capacity for valuing behavior sets man apart from nature. It is also integral to the life of faith. The men who moved in this direction, such as Ritschl and Herrmann, emphasized at the same time the factual side of history. Fact and value make somewhat parallel claims upon man. In this way uncertainty is minimized. It was felt that one can achieve a reasonably accurate account of the historical Jesus. Any remaining doubt is effectively countered by the "valuing" act of the believer.

It is fair to say that current discussion is in some ways returning to the interest in historical fact that constituted a part of the approach of Ritschl and Herrmann. But we are now clearer that this cannot be by way of a stringent division between ascertainable events and faith statements about Jesus. To sort out the factual Jesus *behind* the confession is not as simple as was at first assumed. Indeed, this very way of putting the issue has become suspect. Nor can the revived interest in matters of fact too easily dismiss the uncertainty involved in every "valuing" act. The ongoing conversation must be willing to allow the facts and the valuing act to remain wedded. It must do this without eliminating the real elements of uncertainty that are there. In other words, faith must live in openness within ordinary time, accepting such stabilities as continue to emerge.

Both of these first two groups of men have often been called evangelical liberals, though we have found important differences among them. Over against them we must set the type of solution to the problem

of uncertainty represented first by Kierkegaard, but more recently by Bultmann. Here we come to a shift in the conversation. It is so important, indeed, that we must give even more attention to it than to the groupings just mentioned.

Kierkegaard is the first thinker in our account to face uncertainty directly and embrace it. He does this not only as a part of the spirit of scientific investigation, but also finding in it the very center of faith itself. Individuality and decision come *in the midst of uncertainty* rather than in some more stable realm. One cannot move from fact to faith by objective and reasoned analysis. One must acknowledge the element of risk in faith, knowing that truth comes only through passionate inward decision. Kierkegaard introduced the idea that faith always includes large strands of doubt.

Uncertainty has been a basic element in existentialism from Kierkegaard's day to our own, seen especially in a contemporary thinker such as Bultmann. But this view is reflected not only in believing Christians. It has also been quite apparent among those who are alienated from the Christian faith, at least in its more traditional forms. To such men as Camus and Sartre, for example, life seems unpredictable, often dreadful, and too complicated to reason out. They have tried to live in the validity of their own sincerity and action from moment to moment, in whatever commitment they happen to find—or without it. This is the secular counterpart of the religious man's "leap of faith" or passionate "decision" that makes an authentic life. With acceptance of uncertainty and the sense of unreasonableness—whether within the religious frame or not—came the themes of "absurdity" and "dread" now so well known. One may note that dread of hell, for centuries a vivid motif in Christian life, has become much more a dread of self and of a world incredibly unreasonable and unmanageable. Yet there also came, for faith, tremendous new possibilities of realization.[1]

The very uncertainty in the historical realm that had driven other men

[1] Implicit in this is the passionate urge—against all that is sterile or corrupt—toward what is authentic, what is personally genuine in thought and action. This theme of thinking and experiencing for oneself, of rejecting alike superstition or authority, is so familiar to the present day as to be the very air we breathe and were born into. It joined readily with the existentialist impulse—the acceptance of uncertainty, risk, and decision at the heart of faith—in a mode of thought that has come down to us with increasing force and often somber overtones. To a considerable extent this drive toward what is authentic is shared by all who have been central to our story. Thus for Lessing, almost physically, the authentic is only what he can touch, see, feel personally. For Kant, the sure inward knowledge of law, full of wonder, like the stars. For Kierkegaard, the brave individual leap of faith, unprotected by all the sniveling devices of conventionality. For Schleiermacher and Herrmann, living personal experience. For Bultmann, the decision that means freedom and genuineness. For Barth, openness to God's election of man in Jesus Christ.

to seek a substitute anchor for faith became a virtue in the existentialist stage of our dialog. The appeal is to the *value* of objective uncertainty. From Kierkegaard on there is a stream of thought that advocates a type of faith that draws uncertainty into its very center. This, too, has had the effect of lifting faith out of the realm of historical fact. If existentialism quickens us to the way faith lives in the midst of uncertainty, it is now clear that the uncertainty needs again to be wedded to the factuality of life out of which it sprang. And this return to factuality cannot be a simple repetition of the mood and procedures of an earlier time. It must include the risk and openness to change that Kierkegaard—in our story—has called for in such unforgettable ways.

We may remember how Kierkegaard distinguished the place of Christ in the life of faith from the role of a Socratic intellectual midwife. The Teacher as well as his teachings remains indispensable. Thus existentialism—at least the type dominantly represented in our story—has combined vivid experience with a strong revelational element in its stress on decision and paradoxical openness to what comes from beyond. It insists that the learner needs not only the content of saving Truth, but the inner condition for acquiring it. It thus points toward the radical transcendence featured later by the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth and his followers.

Barth's contribution to the dialog may now be seen in larger perspective. Again the issue of uncertainty is our guiding thread. Evangelical liberalism handled this matter by featuring an anchor for faith in experience. This is either more directly accessible than historical fact, or at least parallel to it. Existentialism made uncertainty integral to religious experience. Faith gains its identity, indeed a backhanded kind of certainty, precisely in its courage to give up all objective supports. In neo-orthodoxy, with Barth as its key representative, we find the certainty or invulnerability of faith viewed strictly from the side of the divine act. Faith has certainty from beyond itself, in God's inner life and eternal decision. Both experiential and existential types here give way to a basis in revelation. Where God discloses himself to faith, there is certainty. To be sure, the tie with Jesus of Nazareth, in his concrete history, is to be highlighted. But his significance is defined and understood in terms of his openness to an activity that moves into history from beyond. His very meaning for faith is summed up in a prior order of reality.[2]

[2] The liveliness and competence of Barth's survey of the nineteenth century is not to be denied. In many ways his *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (a portion of which has been translated as *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959]) provides a model for the kind of dialog we are insisting is integral to Christian thought. His consistent charge is that this era in theology has got itself into an "apologetic corner," with its drive to find an experiential or existential capacity in life and culture—a separate dimension or anchor for faith within the life and affairs of man. Barth's theological alternative is to locate the possibility and the certainties of faith alike in God's act of revelation in Christ.

CURRENT TRENDS

In general, as we see from the great influence of Bultmann and Barth, our story has moved in the directions of existential and revelational "positivism." That these have been its main emphases, with their several possibilities for Christian thought, we feel is clear. We have not suggested that these possibilities are either all-encompassing or fully adequate. There is growing evidence that another major shift in thought and language is even now under way which raises serious questions as to existing lines of thought. Indeed, theology itself may well be nearing or already at the end of an era. At any rate, the present day is a time of new departures in theological style and speech, although the shape of what is emerging is yet unclear. Needless to say, these emphases have their source in our story, even as they reflect the changing social situation.

The more recent directions in the development of our theme are still too vague to allow any definite charting of trends. It is beyond the scope of this study to deal systematically with current ramifications. We will cite here only tendencies with a more or less direct bearing on the faith-history issue, which illustrate the shift now coming about in modern Christian thought.

The "new quest of the historical Jesus" must be appreciated within this larger frame. This is related, in both name and purpose, to the older quest.[3] Numerous voices, many of them in the Bultmann tradition, are associated in the renewed interest in this problem.[4] The ground has shifted considerably between the old and the new quests, as our story has helped to show. Bultmann himself has been at pains to clarify the shift. The earlier life-of-Jesus research was concerned to free the picture of the historical Jesus from its dogmatic overlay, with consequent stress on the difference between Jesus and the kerygma. Today the emphasis is on demonstrating the unity of the two.[5] Whether the tools are at hand that will make possible a "second avenue of access to Jesus" is a highly controversial question. Some thinkers doubt that the present quest is really new at all.[6] What does seem distinctive is the intention to look at the biblical witness from the point of view of what Bultmann calls "exist-

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[3] See pp. 29, 100, 119, and 153.

[4] See especially James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1959), and Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville, eds. *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ: Essays on the New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964).

[5] Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," in Braaten and Harrisville, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[6] See the argument by Van A. Harvey and Schubert M. Ogden, "How New Is the 'New Quest of the Historical Jesus'?" in Braaten and Harrisville, *op. cit.*, pp. 197 ff.

ence toward the future" or "eschatological fact." With this perspective in mind it may be profitable to explore just how fully the "Jesus of history" is at one with the imperative of a radical faith that trusts without objective supports. Our concern here is not to carry on the debate, but to cite the present desire to stress the continuity between fact and faith. In this case, it would be with the aid of existential categories and methods of analysis, and still largely within the framework of the story we have traced.

An even sharper break with the past may be seen in those who constitute what is emerging as the *radical left* in current Christian thought. Specifically, one thinks of perspectives developing in the writing of Paul M. Van Buren, William Hamilton, Gabriel Vahanian, and Thomas J. Altizer. There is an almost total repudiation here of the more obvious Bultmannian and Barthian influences. Yet this contemporary effort to think honestly and speak relevantly within culture must be seen against the backdrop of what it disavows. There are significant variations among those who, broadly, share preoccupation with what Van Buren describes as "the secular meaning of the gospel." But there is basic agreement that faith's relation to the fact of Jesus of Nazareth permits no rebound into any type of wishful invulnerability, whether existential or Christological. It calls, rather, for radical openness to the concrete *fact* (or secular meaning) of its defining center.

For some, the implication is the death of all "God-language." The utter secularity of Jesus must not be obscured by any claim to transcendence, save for the example of a life story which mirrors and works toward a "radical freedom for others." Obviously there are highly controversial elements here, and issues as yet unclear. They constitute an unfinished agenda for modern Christian thought. But the direction itself is what we wish to note. Here again is clear evidence of the determination to face the implications of a faith centered in fully secular fact. And this without premature withdrawal into any sort of separate invulnerability, in terms of an existentialized or a Christologized history.[7]

A FORWARD LOOK: THE NEW HISTORICAL SHAPE OF FAITH

It will be noted that these current thrusts diverge from the past especially at the point of a new determination to think and speak of faith

[7] In spite of differences, notably on the continued meaningfulness of "God-language," a somewhat similar concern seems to permeate an approach to theological thought and speech now evolving around the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg. See especially *Offenbarung als Geschichte* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961). For a survey of the issues and positions involved, see Carl E. Braaten, "The Current Controversy on Revelation: Pannenberg and His Critics," *Journal of Religion*, Vol. XLV, No. 3 (July 1965).

more in continuity with fact. In spite of their creativeness in addressing contemporary culture, neither the Bultmannian nor the Barthian line of thought has adequately clarified how history, with its inescapable matters of fact, is significant for faith. For the one, fact remains a somewhat formal thing in favor of an existentialized faith. For the other, it is more or less emptied in a Christologized faith.

The ground is now shifting in the debate whose terms were first set by Lessing and rounded off by Barth. If earlier the question was how "eternal blessedness" can possibly depend on "accidental truths of history," today the issue is how blessedness can be rooted in anything other than the very times we live in. If formerly the shocking and unbelievable thing was that faith—pure and inviolable—should be anchored in anything so grubby as ordinary fact, now the embarrassing question is how a separated faith can have meaning at all for our all-pervasive involvement in the temporal character of life.

Whatever the outcome of these trends, one thing is clear. We are coming to realize that the moment when faith most truly speaks to life in response to Christ as its historic center is just when it is most completely pulled into everyday existence, into the temporal flow of events. Jesus of Nazareth is less a highly special existential or Christological fact than a plain fact of history.[8] Faith in him and faith statements about him, however fully they may recognize extraordinary significance in his life and work, share in this open factuality. The everyday character of his presence in the temporal process has been and continues to be a powerful orienting focus for Christian faith, with profound implications for all areas of thinking, speaking, and acting.

It is our belief that for Christians of the present day faith must take the form of responsible openness in the midst of temporality. By openness we mean that man can no longer be confident that the basic means of experiencing life are to be found in eternal concepts beyond all time. Every way of thinking and experiencing must include a recognition that it will give way to still other ideas and experiences. When change and novelty are increasingly a part of our world, men must look willingly to possibilities that are even now being born. This openness takes positive direction from the continuities between periods—the ongoing significance of Jesus in his life and death on a cross—while always anticipating still other meanings to be disclosed.

Closely related to this need to be open to change is the temporal character of the life we know. More and more, man has his most profound experiences within the framework and movement of time. We move out

[8] Cf. the popular but somewhat overworked distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie*. The reader will recall how this figured especially in Bultmann and Barth.

of a past that has already occurred, through a present immediately with us, and into a future largely unknown. It has often been assumed that faith can lift man out of his local and finite limitations into some timeless realm. But in our day we must accept the experience of time as a fundamental part of being human. The willingness to engage the past in dialog, and thus develop ever new images of the future, gives us the only possibility of a genuine present. In open consideration of the past fact of Jesus Christ we come upon new possibilities for the future by which our present age is enlivened.

Barth has charged that his predecessors, by and large, overstressed the historical character of faith. Revelation consequently came to be included in history. But we are now constrained to ask whether he has properly stated the issue. The real weakness of the faith-fact story, in its movement from Lessing to Barth, is that this whole postmedieval, post-Renaissance era in theology was insufficiently radical in its openness to history, rather than the reverse. We would like to suggest the possibility of a faith style that takes even more seriously man's temporal involvements. No preoccupation with inward experiential, existential, or revelatory certainties should be allowed to obscure the way faith is centered in Jesus of Nazareth, a man who lived and was subjected to death on a cross. The man of Nazareth, precisely in his factuality and ongoing capacity to orient life and thought, is sufficient to provide faith with its identity. This open yet steadying impact of a past event can give us courage to live responsibly in the present and move toward the future with expectancy and hope.

This faith style is not constrained to feature any type of separated or nonhistorical certainty, either *parallel* with fact (evangelical liberalism), in fact that lies *behind* faith (positivistic historicism), *over against* fact in paradoxical tension (existentialism), or *from beyond* fact as a revelatory disclosure (neo-orthodoxy). Rather, it opens itself to the *historical giveness* and emergent meaning, freedom, and truth of Jesus of Nazareth. It strives toward an understanding of life in light of this historic center. Such a faith style disciplines itself by rooting thought and language in everyday experience. It is open to the meaning, value, and claims of truth wherever they emerge, weighing their significance and authenticity in light of the man from Nazareth.

Such brief discussion cannot answer all the questions raised along the way. But these are among the issues that must be faced by faith thinking and speaking in this generation.

PART II

FAITH AND FREEDOM

Chapter Eight

THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN INCLINATION, OBLIGATION, AND FREEDOM

We have pursued the intimate yet varied relationship between faith and historical fact over some part of its long development. Let us turn now to consider how faith is related to human freedom and to the many changing forms of man's deep sense of obligation—individual or social—that limit and define freedom. Here we come to the center of the ethical question, though it is not to be divorced from either history or truth. The diverse conceptions of freedom found in the Christian faith form a story in many ways parallel to the faith-history development. Again our account unfolds against a background of the Middle Ages.

In this case, it may be initiated by the classic formulation of Kant. Although his ideas have been modified and often rejected by those who came after him, few have been able to escape the questions he raised. We shall pursue an analysis of the freedom of faith as seen in the writings of successive thinkers, in the wake of his setting of the question. This constitutes the central theme of Part II of our survey.

The summary to Part II will set down various typical statements of the freedom of faith as it has been understood in the past two centuries. Here evangelical liberalism, existentialism, and neo-orthodoxy are represented, much as in the discussion of faith and history. Then, as before, we shall glance at current trends that may be considered the beginning of a new era in faith thinking. We shall also consider the findings of this Part in relation to the idea that moral freedom, so essentially a part of faith, may be best expressed today in terms of responsible openness within historical change.

In the pages that follow we may see how faith has been viewed in

relation to freedom, especially as the latter takes shape through the sense of obligation. One might say to begin with that faith as an act of commitment must be very closely related to whatever in ourselves makes us able to think of human activity as free—because it has been defined to us in the light of our obligations.[1] When people are concerned for "eternal values" that are somehow separate from their daily decisions and activities, their *actions* are not really "free."

A discussion of human feelings of inclination and obligation is clearly crucial to any real understanding of freedom. Obligation, let us note, exists only for those who act in freedom (otherwise their actions would be compulsory, in the manner of slaves or puppets). On the other hand, no statement of what men *ought* to do has much power unless they *want* to do it. The failure of sheer statements of moral obligation to bring about action is too commonplace to need example. Here we are plunged at once into what the New Testament discusses under the head of the law as opposed to the freedom of the gospel. The Pauline writings, especially Romans 1–8 and Galatians, present the gospel as neither a new law nor an abandonment of law, but as the spirit of freedom. The law, though a gift of God, is a curse upon man until he comes into the freedom of being in Christ. Thus the interplay of obligation and freedom is crucial to Pauline ethics.

Two important problems are at once involved in any consideration of freedom and obligation. One is the fact of the motivational weakness of ethical discourse. The other is the relation between what is uniquely individual and what may be seen as more nearly universal.

Some linguistic analysts contend that ethical language has no other function than to motivate or persuade those to whom it is used.[2] Much psychological discussion has been devoted to demonstrating that the sense of obligation usually derives from human passion. On the other hand the Idealists, following Kant, were quite careful to keep the language of obligation free of any hint of emotion. Our story will trace the development from Kant's praise of pure duty, and his cool but reverent view of moral law, to its dethronement—especially under the impact of

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[1] "Faith as ultimate concern is an act of the total personality. It happens in the center of the personal life and includes all its elements. Faith is the most centered act of the human mind. It is not a movement of a special section or a special function of man's total being. They all are united in the act of faith. But faith is not the sum total of their impacts. It transcends every special impact as well as the totality of them and it has itself a decisive impact on each of them." Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), p. 4.

[2] The emotivist view has been introduced in recent times by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards in their book, *The Meaning of Meaning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938). The approach has had significant development in the work of Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944).

Kierkegaard and Freud. Finally, we shall note some current attempts to understand the respective roles of desire and duty in what we call freedom.

As to the problem of the individual as opposed to the universal view of ethics, human freedom to act is sometimes defined in terms of our obligation to be guided by "the greatest good for the greatest number" or other formulas for what may be considered universally good. On the subjective side also, the impulse toward ethical action has from time to time been considered a trait of all normal human beings. Kant and Hegel reflect such earlier thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas in affirming a universal quality in ethical sense. To this Kierkegaard advances the poignant question whether "unique" (or personal) action may not sometimes legitimately contradict the "universal." Since his time the tendency has been to consider freedom a matter of individual behavior rather than something that can be rigidly universalized.

DEFINING HUMAN OBLIGATION

A glance at the ways in which human freedom has been described in history shows that the breakdown of the medieval consensus drove man in the following centuries—even down to the present day—into a critical search for a truer understanding of what freedom is. The Scholastic theologians believed that human beings have a natural inclination toward good behavior—or more accurately, a practical capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. In a word, a conscience of sorts. However, it was felt that this could be clouded and tarnished by low desires, ignorance, and faulty reasoning, and was thus in need of correction from the Church with her generally accepted moral authority. Her claim to the latter lay in her superior understanding of the eternal and unchanging nature of ultimate reality, to which she had access through both Scripture and theology.[3]

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[3] Thomas Aquinas tried to steer a middle course between the understanding of general principles and their application to the variety of moral decisions that circumstances may require. For this exercise of practical reason he used the term *synderesis*, which we may loosely translate as conscience, "Whence *synderesis* is said to incline to good, and to murmur at evil, inasmuch as through first principles we proceed to discover, and judge of what we have discovered. It is therefore clear that *synderesis* is not a power, but a natural habit" (*Summa Theologica*, Q. 79, Art. 12.) *Synderesis* is natural in that it is a rational endowment of every man, and a habit in that it is developed through exercise. Other medieval Scholastics, e.g., Bonaventura, disagree, considering that *synderesis* is located in the will and conscience in the intellect. Heiko A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), has a good discussion of this issue.

Contemporary interest in "situation ethics" must be considered against this background. The capacity to be appropriate to its circumstances is understood as the essential trait of practical reason from Aristotle through Aquinas and Kant to the present day.

With the coming of the Renaissance, men began to lose their belief in the moral authority of the Church. A new interest in mathematics and direct observation of nature gave them confidence in their own ability to comprehend the order of things, without benefit of ecclesiastical dogma. The crumbling of the medieval *corpus Christianum* sent them off in two main directions in their efforts to define and describe human freedom. One of these was a sustained attempt to discover and grasp the ordered structure of the objective world and bring human inclinations into some kind of rational harmony with it. This search for ordered structure may be seen in the working concepts of the early English empiricists. Thomas Hobbes, for instance, assumed that human emotions are random expressions of matter in motion. Thus the instinct for self-preservation produces chaotic conflict among men until they agree rationally to submit themselves to a ruling authority.[4] John Stuart Mill believed that self-interest may be reasonably shaped and directed for the preservation of the social order, and that the sense of moral obligation arises in the course of socialization.

The other direction pursued, following the breakdown of medieval thought, was a long effort to pin down and describe what the sense of freedom and obligation within man really consists of, and to build an ethic on this basis. A classic example may be seen in the work of Kant, who tried to portray the element of freedom in personal behavior in terms of a respect for moral law devoid of any other inclinations. Since (according to Kant) the sense of moral law is universally present in personality, a man may reason ethically by asking himself whether what he does, and the reasons he gives himself for doing it, ought to become general rules of behavior. The selections in the next chapter will illustrate how Kant's followers took up and modified this attempt to locate freedom and obligation in the subjective life of man. John Stuart Mill's awareness of social sympathy in human beings also forms part of this subjective picture.

MODERN IMPASSE

There are many variations on these two courses taken by postmedieval thought. But they remain clearly discernible, and the ethical crisis of the modern world is at least in part a result of the dead end to which both basic concepts of freedom have come. Hume's analysis of "causes," for

[4] Hobbes' views are definitely set forth in his *Leviathan* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1963). Part One describes man's natural inclination toward chaotic conflict. Chapter XIII ("Of the Natural Condition of Mankind as Concerning their Felicity, and Misery") describes man's primitive state as a "war of every man against every man" (p. 145) and his life as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (p. 143). The nature of the social covenant is set forth in Part Two.

instance, dovetails with Ludwig Wittgenstein's more recent studies of the meaning of words. Both suggest that what we assume to be sequences of cause and effect in the objective world are actually nothing more than mere customary associations. The impression of a causal connection, they believe, is illusory.[5] Perhaps even more significant is Kierkegaard, who lays bare in superb fashion the problem of relating freedom to any "approximate" objectivity or any kind of universal law. The modern world increasingly avoids trying to define obligation, hence freedom, by an objectively determined reality.

The more subjective approach has similarly run into serious difficulties. Some time ago Nietzsche traced the feeling of obligation to instinctive resentment and terror in a way that cannot be easily dismissed.[6] But the contribution that has made the greatest impact on the contemporary world, especially America, is that of Sigmund Freud. With heavily documented clinical evidence, he argues that the sense of obligation within personality is nothing more than fundamental instinctive impulses set against each other by the commands and prohibitions of parents and other authority figures. Conscience becomes merely a haunting vestige of the inferior position of the infant. It is an altered form, often neurotic in content, of primary instinctual inclinations.

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[5] In *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sec. VII, found in Charles W. Hendel, ed., *Hume Selections* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1955), Hume refutes the idea that there is any essential connection between events described as related by cause and effect. The connection is not objectively there; it is rather a matter of habitual association. "The mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist. This connection, therefore, which we *feel* in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion" (p. 156). Hume's attack upon every conception of external connectedness may be related to his dissatisfaction with Hobbes' account of moral freedom. Hume found in human inclination more than simply egoistic self-love coupled with reason. He sensed also a disposition toward sympathy and benevolence which might well have served to buttress a faltering objectivism. See "An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals," Appendix II, *op. cit.*, pp. 245–48.

Wittgenstein's dismissal of essential meanings of words in favor of a contextual meaning coincides nicely with Hume's attack upon objective essentialism. Wittgenstein taught that the meaning of a word is determined by the conditions of its use. Linguistic analysts by and large have abandoned any attempt to find *the* correct meaning of words, and following Wittgenstein have sought to find the ways in which they are customarily used. A good introduction to this position may be found in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958).

[6] His discussion of the origin of duty in the perverse resentments of mankind may be found in his *The Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Doubleday-Anchor Books, 1956).

Thus both lines of development that have come down to us from the medieval world have been severely challenged. The claims of metaphysics, whether religious or secular, are also being radically questioned in our day. It is recognized by an increasing consensus that we are moving into a postmetaphysical age.[7] The objective character of the world and external life, upon which our diagrams of freedom and obligation have depended for so many centuries, is being seen in a more relative, historically shifting light. The subjective assumptions we have made are giving way to new conceptions of self. The underlying nature of what we perceive as truth is also changing, as we shall see in Part III of this volume. In this new context, men are probing for the real relation between inclination and obligation, obligation and freedom, freedom and faith.

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[7] The criticism of metaphysical language certainly harks back as far as Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* . . . (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1953). Edmund Husserl, a founding father of phenomenology, considered true science to be "presuppositionless," i.e., not determined by standard metaphysical assumptions. Alfred J. Ayer begins his book, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, [1952]) with the chapter "The Elimination of Metaphysics" and goes on to say that philosophy is wholly independent of metaphysics and, by implication, theology. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1929) is another example of the "scientific" attempt to eliminate metaphysics. On this point see John Macquarrie, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 255–57.

Chapter Nine

THE FAITH-FREEDOM STORY

The "ought" of human behavior has an immemorial history, almost longer than that of conscious faith itself. Back in the dim mists of primitive experience, man was already noticing the sometimes threatening quality of nature. Also the peculiar fact that at times he had unaccountably good or bad luck, and perhaps also hard griefs and great joys. Simple animism, whether of ten thousand years ago or of our own day in hills and pockets of the earth to which "civilization" has not effectively reached, makes it both easy and almost automatic to think "I ought to propitiate someone"—some spirit—some influence—some moving power. Here already is an "ought" in unnamed form.

From that stage to our own, man has known many and varied pressures of obligation. These have arisen from diverse sources: personal animism, the sorcerer or the medicine man, priests of ancient cults, the tyranny or justice of chiefs and kings, the growth of a prophetic awareness of God. There has been a gradually evolving body of ethics and morals in both legal and religious forms—both internally and externally applied. These have also developed into social customs, of which the force is neither very directly religious nor legal. We find ourselves now, to a large extent, formed as to ethics by a kind of thought and pressure that is a social intangible. It reaches us through family, neighbors, schools, churches, culture in general, and the very atmosphere of our personal associations. It shifts and changes a good deal from one circle to another and certainly from country to country. Limits are set on one side by law and religion. Ideals are held forth on the other by religion, schools, and other channels of teaching, inspiration, discovery, and reform.

Finally, beyond all legalisms whether civil or religious—beyond the obvious pressures of custom, and sometimes in spite of both—comes the formulation of a man's own consciously held "religion." This may also be called "philosophy," "morals," "honor," or even idea of "courtesy" where that is a notion deeply held. And a highly personal sense of rightness or guilt goes with any one of these or a mixture of them. The sacrifice of

Iphigenia is not more cruel or savage than the sense of guilt can be, acting in disguise below the level of consciousness with all the intensity and perverseness of the Furies themselves.

Yet, like the great artist's indefinable knowledge of proportion, the sense of rightness can be one of the most wonderful things in life. This is when it overflows narrow legalistic understanding to become more truly located in a person's deep integrity, or a mature and generous good will. Here is the courage to risk a good deal for what one believes in. Here is the really glowing passion for justice that quietly and habitually takes trouble to help resolve controversies instead of adding to them. Here may be a purity of thought and morals that (strangely) is like stimulating fresh air—not self-righteous or rigid toward others. And our most profound experience of this sense of rightness will be found somehow at the very center of our faith. It will be found in our openness and adherence to, or rapport with, whatever we know of a deep unifying "Ground" or Almighty "Presence" or direction in life that is inclusive and total. If this were not so, it would not *be* our faith.

We know that there is a relation between "inclination" (or desires) and the sense of rightness. It is a tremendously subtle and intangible relation, but far-reaching and always to be reckoned with. And there is a relation, too, between the sense of rightness and external forms of obligation, such as law and custom in any age. Here somewhere, even aside from Kant, the word *duty* is apt to push in, trying to find its proper place. Finally, there is a relation between sense of rightness and the rest of the personality.

In its rawest, crudest form in murder trials we hear the effort to assess this. Was the plaintiff in such a condition as to be able to distinguish right from wrong? But also in everyday life people differ very much as to the depth or constancy with which they listen to the rightness within themselves. They vary a great deal in their willingness to give ear to integrity, to "conscience," to wholesomeness or soundness, or to make efforts to discern and develop it, find a basis for it. Some persons are narrowed and torn by the process. Others are broadened, fortified, liberated, and invigorated.

We come then to the question of freedom. Ethics, like other disciplines, has its own vocabulary and way of speaking of its chief materials. One of the latter, surely, is the question of freedom. What are we free to do? When do we act freely? What *is* freedom, anyway? To the layman who has never taken a course in ethics and who lives by the everyday language of his time, the word has a clear external and permissive sense. Religious and political freedom—every person's right to worship without interference—the right to have some say or representation in government—these are matters of age-old struggle and importance in the world, still very

active. It is to these meanings that we are mainly attuned. A citizen's rights.

Freedom in its personal ethical sense shifts the ground a little. This relates to the individual's own standards. Without treading on the toes of our later typology of inclination and obligation, let us alert ourselves briefly to what freedom involves in this context. For it is not the same as either our desires or our sense of obligation. Nor is it simply the room we have to move around in, defined by civil or religious law, or social custom, or even conscience, or all four. A truly free man has more in his freedom than just observance of limits, whether these are objectively seen or subjectively felt. Freedom, true freedom, has vitality. Among our other efforts in this section must be that of discovering what and where that source of life is.

Then, what relation has freedom to rightness or sense of obligation? Sometimes obligations are a burden—if our heart is not in them, we are glad to be "*free* of them" (the two are opposed). What bearing on freedom has inclination, or desire? We talk about being "*free* to do what we want." This surely feels like a good sort of thing that lets one breathe and go ahead (the two are identified, are sympathetic). So far, obligation and desire would seem to be opposed in relation to freedom.

Yet there are certain obligations that we care most about: what we urgently want to stand for in life and if necessary die for. Our country, our family, the brotherhood of man, the love of God. Some major thing we do really feel *free* toward, no matter what happens to anything else. We have no doubt about our inner freedom to act, we only hope we can bring it off, act effectively, even against hindrances or pressures. Here the opposites are suddenly brought together, obligation and desire becoming one, and freedom deriving from them. And this in spite of the fact that, oddly enough, we may not be "free" externally. We can have this inner freedom even while frustrated or opposed outwardly. Thus freedom inherent *in* obligation—not *from* an obligation—is an aspect of the matter also.

This runaround of the intangibles involved in freedom, obligation, and desire we must keep our eye on as shrewdly as possible, for somewhere in these shadings and relationships the real answer is hid.

1. Immanuel Kant

1724–1804

(*For biographical notes and brief bibliography see p. 41.*)

"Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing wonder, the more often and reflectively it deals with them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."

"Never treat another person as a means to an end, but only as an end in himself."

Our series on the relation of faith to freedom and obligation begins with Kant. Like Lessing with the problem of history and Descartes for issues of truth, he sets the question in the terms in which it has been discussed ever since. Kant's distinctive approach is his search for an ethical quality or dimension of life that is universal—present in all men and all phases of human experience.[1] This he finds in the sense of duty or obligation. Duty, for Kant, bespeaks the presence in man of moral law. It is also the evidence in individual personalities of freedom to choose one way or another, and of some sort of affinity for the moral way. By his analysis of pure duty Kant tries to find a basis of ethics that is both undeniably present in every person and verifiable by human reason.

Duty in its Kantian sense must not be understood as a compulsion against one's will. It is not subject to irrational influences, whether external pressure or subjective emotion. Rather, it lends itself willingly to fit the moral structure of reality, so far as this can be ascertained. That one is free to fulfill one's duty is assumed rather than proved. It is demonstrated in action rather than being proved like a mathematical theorem. Here is a clear parallel to Descartes' "I think, therefore I am." For Kant the awareness of obligation contains at once the reality of freedom to act. "I ought, therefore I can." Duty, implying the possibility of choice, is itself the perfect evidence of freedom in personality.[2]

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[1] Kant first applied his phenomenological method to the study of empirical experience. He concluded that there is no possibility of such experience without reference to "time" and "space," and that they are therefore the primary forms of intuition. Cf. *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Norman Kemp Smith, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1956), pp. 67–92. Using the same approach to the experience of selfhood, Kant concluded that a sense of obligation is always to be found there. Much contemporary phenomenology is derived directly from this approach. But one must be careful to distinguish two current types. The first examines and describes human consciousness, while the second depicts some objectively verifiable aspect of the world. The first is indebted to Kant far more than the second.

[2] See Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Third Section.

In the following selection Kant notes that the crucial thing about duty is to motivate man's will. If this is done through feelings other than respect for moral law, the result is not a "moral" action and the person is not genuinely moral, or free.[3] How, therefore, can moral law itself be made "the determining ground of the will"?

Kant explores the relation of incentives within the personality. He examines how moral law can be linked to the will and what happens to "inclinations" and "feelings" as a consequence. His vocabulary and close thinking as to motivation are not easy to follow. But for moderns who attach slightly different meanings to such words as *subjective* and *objective, pathological, practical, inclination, feeling, sensuous, cognition,* and even *personality,* the excerpt is a revelation. It displays the careful reasoning and observation of a brilliant thinker in his day. On the other hand, it shows the obscure speculative character of the whole mental and emotional world before Freud. Later, an avalanche of clinical material from a generation of psychiatrists deluged the twentieth century with new awareness of how motivation really works. Ours is often pseudo-knowledge, no doubt, but the two worlds seem astronomically far apart. Yet Kant, under (for us) archaic language and cumbersome modes of statement, has a shrewd notion of the interplay of mental and emotional factors.

Free will, he assumes, if untouched by distracting influences would naturally follow moral law. He then analyzes "inclinations," breaking them down in the end to (1) a "selfishness" that may be in agreement with moral law ("rational self-love") and (2) what he calls "self-conceit." We find the "pathologically determined self [that is, the emotional and feeling side of self] . . . striving to give its pretensions priority." But the moral law within our judgment or reason "inevitably humbles every man when he compares the sensuous propensity of his nature with the law." The very fact of the humiliation and weakening of our perverse inclinations even *in our own opinion* creates respect in us. For whatever humiliates our own self-consciousness and checks our inclinations has "an influence on feeling." The negative side is "intellectual contempt" (for ourselves), while the positive side is respect for moral law. This latter is not a real "feeling," by which Kant apparently means emotion. However, it may conveniently be called "moral feeling," since it helps to remove resistance and is thus a positive motivation to the will.

Kant pauses to wonder at this "singular feeling" that does not have in

[3] The contemporary discussion of the sense of obligation was immensely heightened by G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1956). Moore argues that the good is a nonnatural entity, and that every man has a nonnatural sense of obligation just as he has a natural sense of yellow (cf. pp. 5–20).

it any element of ordinary desires or inclinations. He goes on to discuss the nature of respect and its compelling power: ". . . to a humble plain man, in whom I perceive righteousness [greater than his own] . . . *my mind bows* [Kant's italics]. . . . Why?" Respect "is a tribute we cannot refuse to pay to merit." We may "outwardly withhold it, but we cannot help feeling it inwardly." This despite any jealousy, and what Kant terms unavoidable "reluctance" on our part. Reviewing its origins, he repeats that this respect is the "sole and undoubted moral incentive."

Kant goes on to the formation of maxims for behavior and the question of obedience, and the action that flows from it, called duty. But he stops ever and again to wonder at the "pure moral law . . . whose voice makes even the boldest sinner tremble and forces him to hide himself from it." How singular, he feels, is this influence of a "merely intellectual idea," this feeling "inseparably bound with the idea of the moral law in every finite rational being." Thus obedience to duty should carry us through all reluctance, and we may feel from it "something elevating"—though not pleasure.

He arrives then at a view of what true moral worth and moral judgment are, and the importance of intention. Once again he excludes emotion, even love or sympathy. Here the philosopher embarks on a fairly long discussion of the First and Second Commandments and the Christian gospel and how they are to be regarded. All passion and emotion are forms of self-love until subordinated to respect. The biblical command to love must be understood in terms of respect for the universal moral law and the divine Lawgiver. Love that involves human passion is inferior, and inclination and obligation are to be carefully separated. This seems very far from the *agape* that will concern most modern Christians. Kant's fastidious analysis is hard to appreciate in a time when Romanticism and psychotherapy have long since established a certain respect for every human feeling. Yet his method of clarifying the authentic center of human freedom anticipates more recent efforts.

Recurrently in the excerpt Kant reflects his keen sense of the difference between perfect and finite beings in relation to moral law, and contrasts his special notion of "fanaticism" with the real qualities of "virtue." Duty ("thou sublime and mighty name") has its source in the fact of human personality, free of the mechanism of nature. Man is "the subject of the moral law which is holy, because of the autonomy of his freedom." Little suspecting what lies ahead in the realms of psychology and psychiatry, Kant rejoices in this idea of the freedom of personality, which "places before our eyes the sublimity of our own nature" (and, as he elsewhere notes, the unsuitability of our conduct). Thus the genuine incentive "is nothing else than the pure moral law itself."

It is clear from his writings that Kant saw duty as both rational and

social. Human activity rises above the merely random or arbitrary level when its purposes coincide with the moral law.[4] The significant question for freedom is whether the reasons a man gives himself for his behavior—the logic by which he guides his life—can be thought of in terms of universal obligation. He can test this by asking himself whether the principles he acts on are fit to be universal law. To the extent that he is rational, each human being has within himself an idea of moral order—an archetype that operates as an unconditional moral imperative on all his activity.

As we saw in Part I, the Kantian ethic takes for granted a larger social order in which every one willingly cooperates in social purposes. When a person acts according to the dictates of duty within himself, he is thereby joined to all other morally committed persons in the larger order of society. The ethical activity of individuals is knit together in the "kingdom of ends." Through those who act in the belief that "all duties are divine commands," the kingdom of God is being brought about on earth. Both the faith of the individual and his freedom are found in duty. Implicit in duty, at the same time, are the latent social purposes of mankind.

Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* appeared in 1788. It was a response to criticism and apparent misunderstanding of the ethical theory set forth in the earlier *Critique of Pure Reason,* which expressed his philosophy as a whole. Kant had once said that no critique of "practical reason" (or application of his theory) would be needed. However, the second *Critique,* the editor and translator tells us, "may be considered as Kant's new attempt to explain his ethics from the ground up."[5] Perhaps this accounts for the extreme detail and careful recapitulations of our excerpt, which is from Part I, "Doctrine of the Elements of Pure Practical Reason," Book I, "Analytic of Pure Practical Reason," Chapter III, the first half.

(Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* translated by Lewis White Beck, copyright © 1956 by The Liberal Arts Press, Inc., reprinted

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[4] Kant's ethic is perhaps the best example of what C. D. Broad has called "deontological" ethics. This refers to an approach in which acts are unambiguously obligatory and their consequences at best a secondary consideration. By "teleological" ethics Broad refers to the approach in which calculation of the consequences is the primary consideration in whether an act is obligatory or not. Cf. C. D. Broad, *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), pp. 206 ff. Albrecht Alt has carried this contrast into biblical studies by distinguishing between "apodictic" and "casuistic" law. He suggests that the Ten Commandments are "apodictic"—i.e., obligatory without reference to consequences. Cf. George E. Mendenhall, "Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East," *Biblical Archaeologist,* Vol. XVII, No. 2 (May 1954), p. 26–46 and No. 3 (September 1954), pp. 49–76.

[5] Page 17 of the edition cited below.

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CHAPTER III
THE INCENTIVES OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

What is essential in the moral worth of actions is that the moral law should directly determine the will. If the determination of the will occurs in accordance with the moral law but only by means of a feeling of any kind whatsoever, which must be presupposed in order that the law may become a determining ground of the will, and if the action thus occurs not for the sake of the law, it has legality but not morality. Now, if by an incentive (*elater animi*) we understand a subjective determining ground of a will whose reason does not by its nature necessarily conform to the objective law, it follows, first, that absolutely no incentives can be attributed to the Divine will; and, second, that the [moral][1] incentive of the human will (and that of every created rational being) can never be anything other than the moral law; and, third, that the objective determining ground must at the same time be the exclusive and subjectively sufficient determining ground of action if the latter is to fulfil not merely the letter of the law but also its spirit.*

Any further motives which would make it possible for us to dispense with that of moral law must not be sought, for they would only produce hypocrisy without any substance. Even to let other motives (such as those toward certain advantages) co-operate with the moral law is risky. Therefore, for the purpose of giving the moral law influence on the will, nothing remains but to determine carefully in what way the moral law becomes an incentive and, since the moral law is such an incentive, to see what happens to the human faculty of desire as a consequence of this determining ground. For how a law in itself can be the direct determining ground of the will (which is the essence of morality) is an insoluble problem for the human reason. It is identical with the problem of how a free will is possible. Therefore, we shall not have to show a priori why the moral law supplies an incentive but rather what it effects (or better, must effect) in the mind, so far as it is an incentive.

The essential point in all determination of the will through the moral law is this: as a free will, and thus not only without co-operating with

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[1] [See *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,* Second Section. The distinction between incentive and motive is difficult to preserve when it becomes a question of how the law can itself be practical.]

* Of every action which conforms to the law but does not occur for the sake of the law, one may say that it is morally good in letter but not in spirit (in intention).

sensuous impulses but even rejetting all of them and checking all inclinations so far as they could be antagonistic to the law, it is determined merely by the law. Thus far, the effect of the moral law as an incentive is only negative, and as such this incentive can be known a priori. For all inclination and every sensuous impulse is based on feeling, and the negative effect on feeling (through the check on the inclinations) is itself feeling. Consequently, we can see a priori that the moral law as a ground of determination of the will, by thwarting all our inclinations, must produce a feeling which can be called pain. Here we have the first and perhaps the only case wherein we can determine from a priori concepts the relation of a cognition (here a cognition of pure practical reason) to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. All inclinations taken together (which can be brought into a fairly tolerable system, whereupon their satisfaction is called happiness) constitute self-regard (*solipsismus*). This consists either of self-love, which is a predominant benevolence toward one's self (*philautia*) or of self-satisfaction (*arrogantia*). The former is called, more particularly, selfishness; the latter, self-conceit. Pure practical reason merely checks selfishness, for selfishness, as natural and active in us even prior to the moral law, is restricted by the moral law to agreement with the law; when this is done, selfishness is called rational self-love. But it strikes self-conceit down, since all claims of self-esteem which precede conformity to the moral law are null and void. For the certainty of a disposition which agrees with this law is the first condition of any worth of the person (as will soon be made clear), and any presumption [to worth] prior to this is false and opposed to the law. Now the propensity to self-esteem, so long as it rests only on the sensibility, is one of the inclinations which the moral law checks. Therefore, the moral law strikes down self-conceit.

Since this law, however, is in itself positive, being the form of an intellectual causality, i.e., the form of freedom, it is at the same time an object of respect, since, in conflict with its subjective antagonists (our inclinations), it weakens self-conceit. And as striking down, i.e., humiliating, self-conceit, it is an object of the greatest respect and thus the ground of a positive feeling which is not of empirical origin. This feeling, then, is one which can be known a priori. Respect for the moral law, therefore, is a feeling produced by an intellectual cause, and this feeling is the only one which we can know completely a priori and the necessity of which we can discern.

In the preceding chapter we have seen that anything which presents itself as the object of the will prior to the moral law is excluded from the determining grounds of the will (which are called the unconditionally good) by the law itself as the supreme condition of practical reason. We have also seen that the mere practical form, which consists in the com-

petency of the maxims to give universal laws, first determines what is of itself and absolutely good and is the ground of the maxims of a pure will, which alone is good in every respect. We find now, however, our nature as sensuous beings so characterized that the material of the faculty of desire (objects of the inclination, whether of hope or fear) first presses upon us; and we find our pathologically determined self, although by its maxims it is wholly incapable of giving universal laws, striving to give its pretensions priority and to make them acceptable as the first and original claims, just as if it were our entire self. This propensity to make the subjective determining grounds of one's choice into an objective determining ground of the will in general can be called self-love; when it makes itself legislative and an unconditional practical principle, it can be called self-conceit. The moral law, which alone is truly, i.e., in every respect, objective, completely excludes the influence of self-love from the highest practical principle and forever checks self-conceit, which decrees the subjective conditions of self-love as laws. If anything checks our self-conceit in our own judgment, it humiliates. Therefore, the moral law inevitably humbles every man when he compares the sensuous propensity of his nature with the law. Now if the idea of something as the determining ground of the will humiliates us in our self-consciousness, it awakens respect for itself so far as it is positive and the ground of determination. The moral law, therefore, is even subjectively a cause of respect.

Now everything in self-love belongs to inclination, and all inclination rests on feelings; therefore, whatever checks all inclinations in self-love necessarily has, by that fact, an influence on feeling. Thus we conceive how it is possible to understand a priori that the moral law can exercise an effect on feeling, since it blocks the inclinations and the propensity to make them the supreme practical condition (i.e., self-love) from all participation in supreme legislation. This effect is on the one side merely negative; but on the other, in respect to the restrictive practical ground of pure practical reason, it is positive. And to the latter, no kind of feeling, [even] under the name of a practical or moral feeling, may be assumed as prior to the moral law and as its basis.

The negative effect on feeling (unpleasantness) is, like all influences on feeling and every feeling itself, pathological. As the effect of the consciousness of the moral law, and consequently in relation to an intelligible cause, i.e., to the subject of the pure practical reason as the supreme legislator, this feeling of a rational subject affected with inclinations is called humiliation (intellectual contempt). But in relation to its positive ground, the law, it is at the same time respect for the law; for this law there is no feeling, but, as it removes a resistance, this dislodgment of an obstacle is, in the judgment of reason, equally esteemed as a positive

assistance to its causality. Therefore, this feeling can also be called a feeling of respect for the moral law; on both grounds, however, it can be called a moral feeling.

Thus the moral law, as a formal determining ground of action through practical pure reason, and moreover as a material though purely objective determining ground of the objects of action (under the name of good and evil), is also a subjective ground of determination. That is, it is the incentive to this action, since it has influence on the sensibility of the subject and effects a feeling which promotes the influence of the law on the will. In the subject there is no antecedent feeling tending to morality; that is impossible, because all feeling is sensuous, and the incentives of the moral disposition must be free from every sensuous condition. Rather, sensuous feeling, which is the basis of all our inclinations, is the condition of the particular feeling we call respect, but the cause that determines this feeling lies in the pure practical reason; because of its origin, therefore, this particular feeling cannot be said to be pathologically effected; rather, it is practically effected. Since the idea of the moral law deprives self-love of its influence and self-conceit of its delusion, it lessens the obstacle to pure practical reason and produces the idea of the superiority of its objective law to the impulses of sensibility; it increases the weight of the moral law by removing, in the judgment of reason, the counterweight to the moral law which bears on a will affected by the sensibility. Thus respect for the law is not the incentive to morality; it is morality itself, regarded subjectively as an incentive, inasmuch as pure practical reason, by rejecting all the rival claims of self-love, gives authority and absolute sovereignty to the law. It should be noticed that, as respect is an effect on feeling and thus on the sensibility of a rational being, it presupposes the sensuousness and hence the finitude of such beings on whom respect for the moral law is imposed; thus respect for the law cannot be attributed to a supreme being or even to one free from all sensibility, since to such a being there could be no obstacle to practical reason.

This feeling, under the name of moral feeling, is therefore produced solely by reason. It does not serve for an estimation of actions or as a basis of the objective moral law itself but only as an incentive to make this law itself a maxim. By what name better than moral feeling could we call this singular feeling, which cannot be compared with any pathological feeling? It is of such a peculiar kind that it seems to be at the disposal only of reason, and indeed only of the pure practical reason.

Respect always applies to persons only, never to things. The latter can awaken inclinations, and even love if they are animals (horses, dogs, etc.), or fear, as do the sea, a volcano, or a beast of prey; but they never arouse respect. Something which approaches this feeling is admiration,

and this, as an effect (astonishment) can refer also to things, e.g., lofty mountains, the magnitude, number, and distance of the heavenly bodies, the strength and swiftness of many animals, etc. All of this, however, is not respect. A man can also be an object of love, fear, or admiration even to astonishment, and yet not be an object of respect. His jocular humor, his courage and strength, and his power resulting from his rank among others may inspire me with such feelings, though inner respect for him is still lacking. Fontenelle[1] says, "I bow to a great man, but my mind does not bow." I can add: to a humble plain man, in whom I perceive righteousness in a higher degree than I am conscious of in myself, *my mind bows* whether I choose or not, and however high I carry my head that he may not forget my superior position. Why? His example holds a law before me which strikes down my self-conceit when I compare my own conduct with it; that it is a law which can be obeyed, and consequently is one that can actually be put into practice, is proved before my eyes by the act. I may even be conscious of a like degree of righteousness in myself, and yet respect remains. In men all good is defective, but the law made visible in an example always humbles my pride, since the man whom I see before me provides me with a standard, by clearly appearing to me in a more favorable light regardless of his imperfections, which, though perhaps always with him, are not so well known to me as are my own. Respect is a tribute we cannot refuse to pay to merit whether we will or not; we can indeed outwardly withhold it, but we cannot help feeling it inwardly.

Respect is so far from being a feeling of pleasure that one only reluctantly gives way to it as regards a man. We seek to discover something that will lighten the burden of it for us, some fault to compensate us for the humiliation which we suffer from such an example. The dead themselves are not immune from this criticism, especially when their example appears inimitable. Even the moral law itself in its solemn majesty is exposed to this endeavor to keep one's self from yielding respect to it. Can it be thought that there is any reason why we like to degrade it to the level of our familiar inclination and why we take so much trouble to make it the chosen precept of our well-understood interest, other than the fact that we want to be free of the awesome respect which so severely shows us our own unworthiness? Nevertheless, there is on the other hand so little displeasure in it that, when once we renounce our self-conceit and respect has established its practical influence, we cannot ever satisfy ourselves in contemplating the majesty of this law, and the soul believes itself to be elevated in proportion as it

[1] [Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757), a French satirist and popular philosopher.]

sees the holy law as elevated over it and its frail nature. Certainly, great talents and activity proportionate to them can occasion respect or an analogous feeling, and it is proper to accord it to them; then it seems that admiration is the same as this feeling [of respect]. But if one looks more closely it is noticed that it is always uncertain how great a part of the ability must be ascribed to innate talent and how much to cultivation through one's own diligence. Presumably reason represents it to us as a fruit of cultivation, and therefore as merit which perceptibly diminishes our self-conceit and therefore either reproaches us or else imposes it upon us as an example to be followed in a suitable manner. This respect which we have for a person (really for the law, which his example holds before us) is, therefore, not mere admiration. This is also confirmed by the way the common run of men give up their respect for a man (e.g., Voltaire) when they think they have in some manner found the badness of his character, while the true scholar still feels this respect at least for his talents, since he is himself involved in a business and a vocation which makes imitation of him to some extent a law.

Respect for the moral law is therefore the sole and undoubted moral incentive, so far as this feeling is directed to no object except on this basis. First, the moral law determines the will directly and objectively in the judgment of reason. Freedom, the causality of which is determinable merely through the law, consists, however, only in the fact that it limits all inclinations, including self-esteem, to the condition of obedience to its pure law. This limitation exerts an effect on feeling and produces the sensation of displeasure, which can be known a priori from the moral law. Since, however, it is so far a merely negative effect, originating from the influence of pure practical reason, it checks the activity of the subject to the extent that inclinations are its grounds of determination, and consequently it checks also the opinion of his personal worth, which is nothing without accordance with the moral law. Thus the effect of this law on feeling is merely humiliation, which we thus see a priori, though we cannot know the force of the pure practical law as incentive but only the resistance to the incentives of sensibility. The same law, however, is objectively, i.e., in the conception of pure reason, a direct determining ground of the will. Hence this humiliation occurs proportionately to the purity of the law; for that reason the lowering of the pretensions of moral self-esteem (humiliation) on the sensuous side is an elevation of the moral, i.e., practical, esteem for the law on the intellectual side. In a word, respect for the law is thus by virtue of its intellectual cause a positive feeling that can be known a priori. For any dimunition of obstacles to an activity furthers this activity itself. The acknowledgment of the moral law is the consciousness of an activity of practical reason on objective grounds, and it fails to express its effect in actions

simply because subjective (pathological) causes hinder it. Therefore, respect for the moral law must be regarded also as a positive but indirect effect of the law on feeling, in so far as this feeling [of respect] weakens the hindering influence of the inclinations through humiliating self-conceit; consequently, we must see it as a subjective ground of activity, as an incentive for obedience to the law and as the ground of maxims of a course of life conformable to it. From the concept of an incentive there comes that of an interest which can never be attributed to a being which does not have reason; it indicates an incentive of the will so far as it is presented by reason. Since the law itself must be the incentive in a morally good will, the moral interest must be a pure nonsensuous interest of the practical reason alone. Now on the concept of an interest rests that of a maxim. The latter is thus morally genuine only when it rests on the mere interests that one takes in obedience to the law. All three concepts—of incentive, interest, and maxim—can, however, be applied only to finite beings. For without exception they presuppose a limitation of the nature of the being, in that the subjective character of its choice does not of itself agree with the objective law of a practical reason; they presuppose that the being must be impelled in some manner to action, since an internal obstacle stands against it. They cannot, therefore, be applied to the divine will.

In the boundless esteem for the pure moral law, removed from all advantage, as practical reason presents it to us for obedience, whose voice makes even the boldest sinner tremble and forces him to hide himself from it, there is something so singular that we cannot wonder at finding this influence of a merely intellectual idea on feeling to be inexplicable to speculative reason, and at having to be satisfied with being able to see a priori that such a feeling is inseparably bound with the idea of the moral law in every finite rational being. If this feeling of respect were pathological and thus a feeling of pleasure grounded on the inner sense, it would be futile to try to discover a relation of the feeling to any idea a priori. But it is a feeling which is concerned only with the practical, and with the idea of a law simply as to its form and not on account of any object of the law; thus it cannot be reckoned either as enjoyment or as pain, yet it produces an interest in obedience to the law, and this we call the moral interest. And the capacity of taking such an interest in the law (or of having respect for the moral law itself) is really moral feeling.

The consciousness of a free submission of the will to the law, combined with an inevitable constraint imposed only by our own reason on all inclinations, is respect for the law. The law which commands and inspires this respect is, as we see, no other than the moral law, for no other law precludes all inclinations from having a direct influence on the will. The

action which is objectively practical according to this law, and excluding inclination from its determining grounds, is called duty; and, because of this exclusion, in the concept of duty there is that of practical constraint,[2] i.e., determination to actions however reluctantly they may be done. The feeling which arises from the consciousness of this constraint is not pathological, as are those caused by objects of the senses, but practical, i.e., possible through a prior (objective) determination of the will and the causality of reason. As submission to a law i.e., as a command (which constrains the sensuously affected subject), it contains, therefore, no pleasure but rather displeasure proportionate to this constraint. On the other hand, since this constraint is exercised only through the legislation of one's own reason, it also contains something elevating, and the subjective effect on feeling, in so far as pure practical reason is its sole cause, can also be called self-approbation with reference to pure practical reason, for one knows himself to be determined thereto solely by the law and without any interest; he becomes conscious of an altogether different interest which is subjectively produced by the law and which is purely practical and free. Our taking this interest in an action of duty is not suggested by an inclination, but the practical law absolutely commands it and also actually produces it. Consequently, it has a very special name, viz., respect.

The concept of duty thus requires of action that it objectively agree with the law, while of the maxim of the action it demands subjective respect for the law as the sole mode of determining the will through itself. And thereon rests the distinction between consciousness of having acted *according to duty* and *from duty*, i.e., from respect for the law. The former, legality, is possible even if inclinations alone are the determining grounds of the will, but the latter, morality or moral worth, can be conceded only where the action occurs from duty, i.e., merely for the sake of the law.*

It is of the utmost importance in all moral judging to pay strictest attention to the subjective principle of every maxim, so that all the morality of actions may be placed in their necessity from duty and from respect for the law, and not from love for or leaning toward that which the action is to produce. For men and all rational creatures, the moral

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[2] [*Nötigung*. Abott reads "obligation."]

* If one examines more accurately the concept of respect for persons, as this has been previously presented, one will perceive that it always rests on the consciousness of a duty which an example holds before us and that consequently respect can never have other than a moral ground. It is also seen to be very good and, from the psychological point of view, very useful to our understanding of human nature, that wherever we use the term we pay attention to the mysterious and wonderful, but frequent, regard which human judgment does have for the moral law.

necessity is a constraint, an obligation. Every action based on it is to be considered as duty, and not as a manner of acting which we naturally favor or which we sometime might so favor. This would be tantamount to believing we could finally bring it about that, without respect for the law (which is always connected with fear or at least apprehension that we might transgress it), we, like the independent deity, might come into possession of holiness of will through irrefragable agreement of the will with the pure moral law becoming, as it were, our very nature. This pure law, if we could never be tempted to be untrue to it, would finally cease altogether to be a command for us.

The moral law is, in fact, for the will of a perfect being a law of holiness. For the will of any finite rational being, however, it is a law of duty, of moral constraint, and of the determination of his actions through respect for the law and reverence for its duty. No other subjective principle must be assumed as incentive, for though it might happen that the action occurs as the law prescribes, and thus in accord with duty but not from duty, the intention to do the action would not be moral, and it is the intention which is precisely in question in this legislation.

It is a very beautiful thing to do good to men because of love and a sympathetic good will or to do justice because of a love of order. But this is not the genuine moral maxim of our conduct, the maxim which is suitable to our position among rational beings as men, when we presume, like volunteers, to flout with proud conceit the thought of duty and, as independent of command, merely to will of our own good pleasure to do something to which we think we need no command. We stand under a discipline of reason, and in all our maxims we must not forget our subjection to it, or withdraw anything from it, or by an egotistical illusion detract from the authority of the law (even though it is given by our own reason) so that we could place the determining ground of our will (even though it is in accordance with the law) elsewhere than in the law itself and in respect for it. Duty and obligation are the only names which we must give to our relation to the moral law. We are indeed legislative members of a moral realm which is possible through freedom and which is presented to us as an object of respect by practical reason; yet we are at the same time subjects in it, not sovereigns, and to mistake our inferior position as creatures and to deny, from self-conceit, respect to the holy law is, in spirit, a defection from it even if its letter be fulfilled.

The possibility of such a command as, "Love God above all and thy neighbor as thyself,"* agrees very well with this. For, as a command, it

* The principle of one's own happiness, which some wish to make the supreme principle of morality, is in striking contrast to this law. This principle would read "Love thyself above all, but God and thy neighbor for thine own sake."

requires respect for a law which orders love and does not leave it to arbitrary choice to make love the principle. But love to God as inclination (pathological love) is impossible, for He is not an object of the senses. The latter is indeed possible toward men, but it cannot be commanded, for it is not possible for man to love someone merely on command. It is, therefore, only practical love which can be understood in that kernel of all laws. To love God means in this sense to like to do His commandments, and to love one's neighbor means to like to practice all duties toward him. The command which makes this a rule cannot require that we have this disposition but only that we endeavor after it. To command that one do something gladly is self-contradictory. For a law would not be needed if we already knew of ourselves what we ought to do and moreover were conscious of liking to do it; and if we did it without liking but only out of respect for the law, a command which makes just this respect the incentive of the maxim would counteract the disposition it commands. That law of all laws, like every moral prescription of the Gospel, thus presents the moral disposition in its complete perfection, and though as an ideal of holiness it is unattainable by any creature, it is yet an archetype which we should strive to approach and to imitate in an uninterrupted infinite progress. If a rational creature could ever reach the stage of thoroughly liking to do all moral laws, it would mean that there was no possibility of there being in him a desire which could tempt him to deviate from them, for overcoming such a desire always costs the subject some sacrifice and requires self-compulsion, i.e., an inner constraint to do that which one does not quite like to do. To such a level of moral disposition no creature can ever attain. For since he is a creature, and consequently is always dependent with respect to what he needs for complete satisfaction with his condition, he can never be wholly free from desires and inclinations which, because they rest on physical causes, do not of themselves agree with the moral law, which has an entirely different source. Consequently, it is with reference to these desires always necessary to base the intention of the creature's maxims on moral constraint and not on ready willingness, i.e., to base it on respect which demands obedience to the law even though the creature does not like to do it, and not on love, which apprehends no inward reluctance to the law by the will. This would be true even if the mere love for the law (which would in this case cease to be a command, and morality, subjectively passing over into holiness, would cease to be virtue) were made the constant but unattainable goal of its striving. For in the case of what we esteem and yet dread because of our consciousness of our weaknesses, the most reverential awe would be changed into inclination, and respect into love, because of the greater ease in satisfy-

ing the latter. At least this would be the perfection of a disposition dedicated to the law, if it were ever possible for a creature to attain it.

This reflection is not intended so much to clarify by exact concepts the evangelical command just cited in order to prevent religious fanaticism with reference to the love of God as to define accurately the moral intention directly with regard to our duties to others and to control and, if possible, to prevent a narrowly moral fanaticism, which infects many persons. The stage of morality on which man (and, so far as we know, every rational creature) stands is respect for the moral law. The disposition which obliges him to obey it is: to obey it from duty and not from a spontaneous inclination or from an endeavor unbidden but gladly undertaken. The moral condition which he can always be in is virtue, i.e., moral disposition in conflict, and not holiness in the supposed possession of perfect purity of the intentions of the will. The mind is disposed to nothing but blatant moral fanaticism and exaggerated self-conceit by exhortation to action, as noble, sublime and magnanimous. By it people are led to the illusion that the determining ground of their actions is not duty, i.e, respect for the law whose yoke must be borne whether liked or not (though it is a mild yoke, as imposed by reason). This law always humbles them when they follow (obey) it, but by this kind of exhortation they come to think that those actions are expected of them not because of duty but only because of their own bare merit. For not only do they not fulfil the spirit of the law when they imitate such acts on the basis of such a principle, since the spirit of the law lies in the submissive disposition and not in the merely lawful character of the act, leaving the principle to be what it may; and not only do they in this manner make the incentives pathological (locating them in sympathy or self-love) and not moral (located in the law). But they produce in this way a shallow, high-flown, fantastic way of thinking, flattering themselves with a spontaneous goodness of heart, needing neither spur nor bridle nor even command, and thereby forgetting their obligation, which they ought to think of rather than their merit. Certainly actions of others which have been done with great sacrifice and merely for the sake of duty may be praised as noble and sublime deeds, yet only in so far as there are clues which suggest that they were done wholly out of respect for duty and not from aroused feelings. But if anyone wishes to put them forward as examples for imitation, the incentive to be employed must be only the respect for duty, the sole genuine moral feeling, this earnest holy precept which does not leave it to our vain self-love to dally with pathological impulses (as far as they are analogous to morality) and to pride ourselves on our meritorious worth. For all actions which are praiseworthy, if we only search we shall find a law of duty which commands and does not leave us to choose what may be agreeable

to our propensity. That is the only way of representing [morality] which morally educates the soul, because it is the only one which is capable of constant and accurately defined principles.

If fanaticism in its most general sense is a deliberate overstepping of the limits of human reason, moral fanaticism is this overstepping of limits which practical pure reason sets to mankind. Pure practical reason thereby forbids us to place the subjective determining ground of dutiful actions, i.e., their moral incentive, anywhere else than in the law itself, and to place the disposition which is thereby brought into the maxims elsewhere than in the respect for this law; it commands that we make the thought of duty, which strikes down all arrogance as well as vain self-love, the supreme life-principle of all human morality.

If this is so, then not only novelists and sentimental educators (even though they may be zealously opposed to sentimentalism) but also philosophers and indeed the strictest of them, the Stoics, have instituted moral fanaticism instead of a sober but wise moral discipline, though the fanaticism of the latter was more heroic, while that of the former is of a more shallow and pliable nature. And we may, without hypocrisy, truly say of the moral teaching of the Gospel that, through the purity of its moral principle and at the same time through the suitability of its principle to the limitations of finite beings, it first brought all good conduct of man under the discipline of a duty clearly set before him, which does not permit him to indulge in fancies of moral perfections; and that it set bounds of humility (i.e., self-knowledge) to self-conceit as well as to self-love, both of which readily mistake their limits.

Duty! Thou sublime and mighty name that dost embrace nothing charming or insinuating but requirest submission and yet seekest not to move the will by threatening aught that would arouse natural aversion or terror but only holdest forth a law which of itself finds entrance into the mind and yet gains reluctant reverence (though not always obedience)—a law before which all inclinations are dumb even though they secretly work against it: what origin is there worthy of thee, and where is to be found the root of thy noble descent which proudly rejects all kinship with the inclinations and from which to be descended is the indispensable condition of the only worth which men can give themselves?

It cannot be less than something which elevates man above himself as a part of the world of sense, something which connects him with an order of things which only the understanding can think and which has under it the entire world of sense, including the empirically determinable existence of man in time, and the whole system of all ends which is alone suitable to such unconditional practical laws as the moral. It is nothing else than personality, i.e., the freedom and independence from the mechanism of nature regarded as a capacity of a being which is subject

to special laws (pure practical laws given by its own reason), so that the person as belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality so far as he belongs to the intelligible world. For it is then not to be wondered at that man, as belonging to two worlds, must regard his own being in relation to his second and higher vocation with reverence and the laws of this vocation with the deepest respect.

Many expressions which indicate the worth of objects according to moral ideas are based on this origin. The moral law is holy (inviolable). Man is certainly unholy enough, but humanity in his person must be holy to him. Everything in creation which he wishes and over which he has power can be used merely as a means; only man, and, with him, every rational creature, is an end in itself. He is the subject of the moral law which is holy, because of the autonomy of his freedom. Because of the latter, every will, even the private will of each person directed to himself, is restricted to the condition of agreement with the autonomy of the rational being, namely, that it be subjected to no purpose which is not possible by a law which could arise from the will of the passive subject itself. This condition thus requires that the person never be used as a means except when it is at the same time an end. We may rightly attribute this condition even to the divine will with respect to the rational beings in the world as its creatures, since the condition rests on the personality of these beings, whereby alone they are ends in themselves.

This idea of personality awakens respect; it places before our eyes the sublimity of our own nature (in its [higher] vocation), while it shows us at the same time the unsuitability of our conduct to it, thus striking down our self-conceit. This is naturally and easily observed by the most common human reason. Has not every even fairly honest man sometimes found that he desists from an otherwise harmless lie which would extricate him from a vexing affair or which would even be useful to a beloved and deserving friend simply in order not to have to contemn himself secretly in his own eyes? In the greatest misfortunes of his life which he could have avoided if he could have disregarded duty, does not a righteous man hold up his head thanks to the consciousness that he has honored and preserved humanity in his own person and in its dignity, so that he does not have to shame himself in his own eyes or have reason to fear the inner scrutiny of self-examination? This comfort is not happiness, not even the smallest part of happiness; for no one would wish to have occasion for it, not even once in his life, or perhaps even would desire life itself in such circumstances. But he lives and cannot tolerate seeing himself as unworthy of life. This inner satisfaction is therefore merely negative with reference to everything which might make life pleasant; it is the defense against the danger of sinking in personal worth after the value of his circumstances has been completely lost. It is the

effect of a respect for something entirely different from life, in comparison and contrast to which life and its enjoyment have absolutely no worth. He yet lives only because it is his duty, not because he has the least taste for living.

Such is the nature of the genuine incentive of pure practical reason. It is nothing else than the pure moral law itself, so far as it lets us perceive the sublimity of our own supersensuous existence and subjectively effects respect for their higher vocation in men who are conscious of their sensuous existence and of the accompanying dependence on their pathologically affected nature. Now let there be associated with this incentive so many charms and pleasures of life that even for their sake alone the most skilful choice of a reasonable Epicurean, considering the highest welfare of life, would declare himself for moral conduct (and it may even be advisable to connect this prospect of a merry enjoyment of life with that supreme determining motive which is sufficient of itself); but this is only in order to hold a balance against the attractions which vice on the other side does not fail to offer and not in order to place in these prospects even the smallest part of the real moving force when duty is what we are concerned with. For the latter would be simply to destroy the purity of the moral disposition at its source. The majesty of duty has nothing to do with the enjoyment of life; it has its own law, even its own tribunal, and however much one wishes to mix them together, in order to offer the mixture to the sick as though it were a medicine, they nevertheless soon separate of themselves; but, if they do not separate, the moral ingredient has no effect at all, and even if the physical life gained some strength in this way, the moral life would waste away beyond rescue.

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The ringing clarity and rigor of Kant's conception of obligation made an enormous impact upon the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Even such critics as Hegel and Kierkegaard conceded that duty is one of the enduring "stages" of human existence. Ideas of the kingdom of God found among the neo-Kantians and in evangelical liberalism have drawn heavily upon Kant. Ritschl's evaluation of value over fact parallels Kant's contrast between theoretical and practical reason. Neo-orthodoxy has been equally under his influence. Barth's concept of God as "Commander" and Emil Brunner's treatment of the "divine imperative" are striking reformulations of Kantian terminology.

Yet the very rigor of Kant's notion of duty led to its severest criticism. Is freedom best described against a background of never-ending opposition between inclination and obligation, in which one part of the personality is forever pitted against another or subject to it? Must definitions of freedom always exclude the possibility of harmony between inclination

and duty? Does desire never go naturally—and rightly—in the direction of obligation? Is the individual always dominated by the universal, or can there sometimes be a "suspension of the ethical," as Kierkegaard suggested? Moreover, is respect for law an adequate account of moral motivation? These are among the questions to which Kant's successors have addressed themselves.

2. John Stuart Mill

1806-1873

English philosopher, economist. Born in London, educated entirely by stern Scottish father, James Mill, philosopher and historian. Began Greek at 3, read Herodotus and Plato before 8, also much history; at 8 began Latin, Euclid, algebra. At 16 went to France, studied chemistry and botany; on return read psychology and Roman law. In 1822 entered India House, where he worked until its dissolution in 1858, for twenty years in charge of the Company's relations with native states.[1] *Married 1851, widowed 1858, thereafter lived chiefly in France, though a member of Parliament for three years. Good botanist, fair pianist; loved music. A follower at first of his father and Bentham, he was from youth a prolific writer, debater, editor, and reformer, with deep concern for justice and the working class. Precursor of socialism, which he considered too advanced for his day. A founder, among others, of the first women's suffrage society.*

"The social state is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives himself otherwise than as a member of a body."

At a time when it had come under rather heavy criticism, John Stuart Mill wrote in defense of the "Utilitarian" approach to ethics.[2] Influenced by Jeremy Bentham, his own father, and others, he set forth what he called the principle of the "greatest happiness" as the basis of ethical judgment. In this he argued for the greatest pleasure and least pain of

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Mill's best-known works are the following: The System of Logic *(1843),* Principles of Political Economy *(1848),* On Liberty *(1857),* Considerations on Representative Government *(1861) and* Utilitarianism *(1861).*

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[1] This was the East India Company, founded in the seventeenth century for trading purposes, but which gradually acquired governing and administrative functions in the widely held British Indian territories. It developed a civil service run by English administrators and directed from England before the British Government took it over. Thus Mill, who in the end became head of his department, had a long and direct experience of practical government.

[2] Mill's statement of the Utilitarian position anticipates much of the contemporary criticism of Kant's ethic. The focus is upon the motivational weakness of obligation. See the series of articles under the heading "The Psychology of Conduct and the Concept of Obligation" in Wilfrid Sellars and John Hospers, *Readings in Ethical Theory* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952). Cf. also Henry David Aiken, "The Authority of Moral Judgments," in his *Reason and Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

the greatest number as the criterion for personal decision. Note that this is not so much an ethical principle as a mode of reasoning within ethics. It is not altogether comparable with Kant's description of duty, but rather with the measuring device, in Kant's version of ethical judgment, of imagining one's behavior (or "maxims") as universal moral law.

Mill doubts whether the reasoning here is sufficiently explicit. Even if one were to think of his own act or reasons for action as universal—how then could one decide whether such a law would be really desirable? Kant, of course, depended upon immediate recognition by an innate moral archetype. Mill is wary of any such conception of innate power, or ideas. He replies that one still needs to consider whether a given law would, in fact, foster the greatest happiness before one can be sure it is right.

Mill's approach to the concept of freedom lies in a direction generally opposite to that of Kant. In trying to get at what underlies feelings of obligation, he analyzes personal behavior in terms of reasoning capacity and natural instincts. Beyond these elements, a person is molded in personality by the flow of objective experience and influences. Mill considers it obvious that human beings instinctively seek their own pleasure and avoid pain. The inclination toward personal happiness and away from painful experience is an observable part of all human nature.

He does not deny that moral obligation is an important element in human life. His doubts focus rather upon the question whether the sense of duty is a thing in itself, born in man, before growth and environmental influences take effect. Or is it rather derived from them? Mill is persuaded that moral feelings are the product of training, childhood experience, reverence, and awe. Though an important sanction in society, they are secondary. The main root of ethical development in mankind must be found elsewhere.

What Kant avoided in trying to pinpoint the ultimate roots of morality, Mill fixes upon as its essential source. He looks for a *feeling*—a sentiment or natural inclination—that might reasonably be shaped by social experience. Here he is directly in line with Thomas Hobbes, who believed that society is constituted by a rational covenant arising out of man's various egoistic self-interests. But Mill moves beyond Hobbes to find in human inclinations more than fear and the drive for security. Men seem to have a natural sympathy, he feels, for avoidance of pain and furtherance of pleasure *in their fellow men.* Weak though it may be, some feeling of sympathy for others exists in all except him "whose mind is a moral blank." "The deeply rooted conception which every individual even now has of himself as a social being, tends to make him feel it one of his natural wants that there should be harmony between his feelings and aims and those of his fellow creatures."

By nature, necessity, and habit, in short, man is inclined to live together in society. Individuals are so bound to it that totally isolated life is unnatural and improbable. Every thoughtful person recognizes that the interest of each is the interest of all. In addition there is the weak but ever present sympathy for the happiness of other persons. Though not many are strongly motivated to act in the general interest, very few are totally devoid of social sentiment. Individual freedom is not formed, in the end, merely by externally enforced sanctions of obligation. It takes shape in the generally willing recognition that the basic purposes of each coincide with the common interests of all.

Our selection from Mill begins with a question as to what constitutes the binding force of a moral standard or obligation. What makes us obey it? Mill reminds us that the query applies to all standards, not just any one view of morality. We are apt to feel most strictly bound in obvious matters of custom—not to steal or murder, for instance. Here custom is so deeply rooted as to make the obligation seem self-evident, unlike the more tenuous-sounding duties of social concern. But the source of obligation, or what gives force to it within ourselves, is the same for both.

There follows a discussion of the "principle of utility" (Mill's "happiness" morality) and its sanctions, external and internal. This is in essence a system of rewards and punishments, whether from God or man and whether tangible or intangible. Intangible punishment is the "pain . . . attendant on violation of duty" whose name is Conscience. This is so complicated by many emotions and associations as to be dubbed by some critics as "mystical." With his usual trenchant disposal of fuzziness, Mill here remarks that the binding force consists in "a mass of feeling which must be broken through in order to do what violates our standard of right." And which, if we do break through it, will probably cause remorse. "Whatever theory we have of the nature or origin of conscience, this is what essentially constitutes it."

Since the inner binding force of all morality is a subjective feeling, what is the particular feeling that binds us to the standard of most pleasure and least pain for the greatest number? The answer is: the conscientious feelings of mankind. There follows a discussion of the relative strength of subjective feelings and notions of objective reality. Whether the feeling of duty is innate or implanted is immaterial. The social measure of ethical obligation is still sound.

Mill, however, thinks moral feelings are acquired, and if so, none the less natural for it. We acquire the faculty of speech, of building cities, of tilling the soil. The moral faculty, "if not a part of our nature, is a natural outgrowth from it." This faculty is capable of "being brought by cultivation to a high degree of development."

It also, unfortunately, lends itself to almost incredible abuse. It can be

trained in almost any direction through early influence and sufficient force of external sanctions. (Do we see Freud and Hitler on the horizon, each with his special genius, creative or destructive?) But Mill believed that contrived and absurd or dangerous moral standards dissolve under intelligent analysis. The Utilitarian morality, on the other hand, harmonizes with human feelings and need. There is a basis of powerful natural sentiment for it. This, "when once the general happiness is recognized as the ethical standard, will constitute the strength of the utilitarian morality." The social body itself requires such a standard. "Society between equals can only exist on the understanding that the interests of all are to be regarded equally." As the individual's social ties with other people strengthen, he is led to "identify his *feelings* more and more with their good [Mill's italics]."

But we need not wait for perfection. Even now, thought Mill, the person of average good will does not really *like* to gain at the expense of others. He wants to live in harmony with his fellows, and in his own aims and purposes likes to think that their good is also being achieved. This may be a weak feeling in many persons, but taken collectively it is the strongest root or sanction of morality in human beings.

Utilitarianism, from which our excerpt is taken, was compiled from earlier papers and first published in *Fraser's Magazine* three years after Mill's retirement from India House. It is a statement of the Utilitarian philosophy of his father James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. This he claimed as his own point of view but he combined it with so many perceptive qualifications as to make of it almost a different outlook altogether. Our selection is the whole of Chapter III of this work.

Bentham had believed in the purely selfish motivation of man. How this could ever result in social good he did not make clear. But the younger Mill had a keen awareness of man's social instinct. Utilitarian morality is firmly based, he said, on "the social feelings of mankind: the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures."[3]

(From John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism,* in *Utilitarianism, Liberty, and Representative Government,* Ernest Rhys, ed., "Everyman's Library" [London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910], pp. 24–32.)

Chapter III
OF THE ULTIMATE SANCTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY

The question is often asked, and properly so, in regard to any supposed moral standard—What is its sanction? what are the motives to obey it?

[3] Pp. x–xi, xiv of the edition cited below, from the Introduction by A. D. Lindsay.

or more specifically, what is the source of its obligation? whence does it derive its binding force? It is a necessary part of moral philosophy to provide the answer to this question; which, though frequently assuming the shape of an objection to the utilitarian morality, as if it had some special applicability to that above others, really arises in regard to all standards. It arises, in fact, whenever a person is called on to *adopt* a standard, or refer morality to any basis on which he has not been accustomed to rest it. For the customary morality, that which education and opinion have consecrated, is the only one which presents itself to the mind with the feeling of being *in itself* obligatory; and when a person is asked to believe that this morality *derives* its obligation from some general principle round which custom has not thrown the same halo, the assertion is to him a paradox; the supposed corollaries seem to have a more binding force than the original theorem; the superstructure seems to stand better without, than with, what is represented as its foundation. He says to himself, I feel that I am bound not to rob or murder, betray or deceive; but why am I bound to promote the general happiness? If my own happiness lies in something else, why may I not give that the preference?

If the view adopted by the utilitarian philosophy of the nature of the moral sense be correct, this difficulty will always present itself, until the influences which form moral character have taken the same hold of the principle which they have taken of some of the consequences—until, by the improvement of education, the feeling of unity with our fellow-creatures shall be (what it cannot be denied that Christ intended it to be) as deeply rooted in our character, and to our own consciousness as completely a part of our nature, as the horror of crime is in an ordinarily well brought up young person. In the meantime, however, the difficulty has no peculiar application to the doctrine of utility, but is inherent in every attempt to analyse morality and reduce it to principles; which, unless the principle is already in men's minds invested with as much sacredness as any of its applications, always seems to divest them of a part of their sanctity.

The principle of utility either has, or there is no reason why it might not have, all the sanctions which belong to any other system of morals. Those sanctions are either external or internal. Of the external sanctions it is not necessary to speak at any length. They are, the hope of favour and the fear of displeasure, from our fellow-creatures or from the Ruler of the Universe, along with whatever we may have of sympathy or affection for them, or of love and awe of Him, inclining us to do his will independently of selfish consequences. There is evidently no reason why all these motives for observance should not attach themselves to the utilitarian morality, as completely and as powerfully as to any other. Indeed,

those of them which refer to our fellow-creatures are sure to do so, in proportion to the amount of general intelligence; for whether there be any other ground of moral obligation than the general happiness or not, men do desire happiness; and however imperfect may be their own practice, they desire and commend all conduct in others towards themselves, by which they think their happiness is promoted. With regard to the religious motive, if men believe, as most profess to do, in the goodness of God, those who think that conduciveness to the general happiness is the essence, or even only the criterion of good, must necessarily believe that it is also that which God approves. The whole force therefore of external reward and punishment, whether physical or moral, and whether proceeding from God or from our fellow men, together with all that the capacities of human nature admit of disinterested devotion to either, become available to enforce the utilitarian morality, in proportion as that morality is recognised; and the more powerfully, the more the appliances of education and general cultivation are bent to the purpose.

So far as to external sanctions. The internal sanction of duty, whatever our standard of duty may be, is one and the same—a feeling in our own mind; a pain, more or less intense, attendant on violation of duty, which in properly cultivated moral natures rises, in the more serious cases, into shrinking from it as an impossibility. This feeling, when disinterested, and connecting itself with the pure idea of duty, and not with some particular form of it, or with any of the merely accessory circumstances, is the essence of Conscience; though in that complex phenomenon as it actually exists, the simple fact is in general all encrusted over with collateral associations, derived from sympathy, from love, and still more from fear; from all the forms of religious feeling; from the recollections of childhood and of all our past life; from self-esteem, desire of the esteem of others, and occasionally even self-abasement. This extreme complication is, I apprehend, the origin of the sort of mystical character which, by a tendency of the human mind of which there are many other examples, is apt to be attributed to the idea of moral obligation, and which leads people to believe that the idea cannot possibly attach itself to any other objects than those which, by a supposed mysterious law, are found in our present experience to excite it. Its binding force, however, consists in the existence of a mass of feeling which must be broken through in order to do what violates our standard of right, and which, if we do nevertheless violate that standard, will probably have to be encountered afterwards in the form of remorse. Whatever theory we have of the nature or origin of conscience, this is what essentially constitutes it.

The ultimate sanction, therefore, of all morality (external motives apart) being a subjective feeling in our own minds, I see nothing embarrassing to those whose standard is utility, in the question, what is the sanction

of that particular standard? We may answer, the same as of all other moral standards—the conscientious feelings of mankind. Undoubtedly this sanction has no binding efficacy on those who do not possess the feelings it appeals to; but neither will these persons be more obedient to any other moral principle than to the utilitarian one. On them morality of any kind has no hold but through the external sanctions. Meanwhile the feelings exist, a fact in human nature, the reality of which, and the great power with which they are capable of acting on those in whom they have been duly cultivated, are proved by experience. No reason has ever been shown why they may not be cultivated to as great intensity in connection with the utilitarian, as with any other rule of morals.

There is, I am aware, a disposition to believe that a person who sees in moral obligation a transcendental fact, an objective reality belonging to the province of "Things in themselves," is likely to be more obedient to it than one who believes it to be entirely subjective, having its seat in human consciousness only. But whatever a person's opinion may be on this point of Ontology, the force he is really urged by is his own subjective feeling, and is exactly measured by its strength. No one's belief that duty is an objective reality is stronger than the belief that God is so; yet the belief in God, apart from the expectation of actual reward and punishment, only operates on conduct through, and in proportion to, the subjective religious feeling. The sanction, so far as it is disinterested, is always in the mind itself; and the notion therefore of the transcendental moralists must be, that this sanction will not exist *in* the mind unless it is believed to have its root out of the mind; and that if a person is able to say to himself, This which is restraining me, and which is called my conscience, is only a feeling in my own mind, he may possibly draw the conclusion that when the feeling ceases the obligation ceases, and that if he find the feeling inconvenient, he may disregard it, and endeavour to get rid of it. But is this danger confined to the utilitarian morality? Does the belief that moral obligation has its seat outside the mind make the feeling of it too strong to be got rid of? The fact is so far otherwise, that all moralists admit and lament the ease with which, in the generality of minds, conscience can be silenced or stifled. The question, Need I obey my conscience? is quite as often put to themselves by persons who never heard of the principle of utility, as by its adherents. Those whose conscientious feelings are so weak as to allow of their asking this question, if they answer it affirmatively, will not do so because they believe in the transcendental theory, but because of the external sanctions.

It is not necessary, for the present purpose, to decide whether the feeling of duty is innate or implanted. Assuming it to be innate, it is an open question to what objects it naturally attaches itself; for the philosophic supporters of that theory are now agreed that the intuitive per-

ception is of principles of morality and not of the details. If there be anything innate in the matter, I see no reason why the feeling which is innate should not be that of regard to the pleasures and pains of others. If there is any principle of morals which is intuitively obligatory, I should say it must be that. If so, the intuitive ethics would coincide with the utilitarian, and there would be no further quarrel between them. Even as it is, the intuitive moralists, though they believe that there are other intuitive moral obligations, do already believe this to be one; for they unanimously hold that a large *portion* of morality turns upon the consideration due to the interests of our fellow-creatures. Therefore, if the belief in the transcendental origin of moral obligation gives any additional efficacy to the internal sanction, it appears to me that the utilitarian principle has already the benefit of it.

On the other hand, if, as is my own belief, the moral feelings are not innate, but acquired, they are not for that reason the less natural. It is natural to man to speak, to reason, to build cities, to cultivate the ground, though these are acquired faculties. The moral feelings are not indeed a part of our nature, in the sense of being in any perceptible degree present in all of us; but this, unhappily, is a fact admitted by those who believe the most strenuously in their transcendental origin. Like the other acquired capacities above referred to, the moral faculty, if not a part of our nature, is a natural outgrowth from it; capable, like them, in a certain small degree, of springing up spontaneously; and susceptible of being brought by cultivation to a high degree of development. Unhappily it is also susceptible, by a sufficient use of the external sanctions and of the force of early impressions, of being cultivated in almost any direction: so that there is hardly anything so absurd or so mischievous that it may not, by means of these influences, be made to act on the human mind with all the authority of conscience. To doubt that the same potency might be given by the same means to the principle of utility, even if it had no foundation in human nature, would be flying in the face of all experience.

But moral associations which are wholly of artificial creation, when intellectual culture goes on, yield by degrees to the dissolving force of analysis: and if the feeling of duty, when associated with utility, would appear equally arbitrary; if there were no leading department of our nature, no powerful class of sentiments, with which that association would harmonise, which would make us feel it congenial, and incline us not only to foster it in others (for which we have abundant interested motives), but also to cherish it in ourselves; if there were not, in short, a natural basis of sentiment for utilitarian morality, it might well happen that this association also, even after it had been implanted by education, might be analysed away.

But there *is* this basis of powerful natural sentiment; and this it is

which, when once the general happiness is recognized as the ethical standard, will constitute the strength of the utilitarian morality. This firm foundation is that of the social feelings of mankind; the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures, which is already a powerful principle in human nature, and happily one of those which tend to become stronger, even without express inculcation, from the influences of advancing civilisation. The social state is at once so natural, so necessary, and so habitual to man, that, except in some unusual circumstances or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives himself otherwise than as a member of a body; and this association is riveted more and more, as mankind are further removed from the state of savage independence. Any condition, therefore, which is essential to a state of society, becomes more and more an inseparable part of every person's conception of the state of things which he is born into, and which is the destiny of a human being. Now, society between human beings, except in the relation of master and slave, is manifestly impossible on any other footing than that the interests of all are to be consulted. Society between equals can only exist on the understanding that the interests of all are to be regarded equally. And since in all states of civilisation, every person, except an absolute monarch, has equals, every one is obliged to live on these terms with somebody; and in every age some advance is made towards a state in which it will be impossible to live permanently on other terms with anybody. In this way people grow up unable to conceive as possible to them a state of total disregard of other people's interests. They are under a necessity of conceiving themselves as at least abstaining from all the grosser injuries, and (if only for their own protection) living in a state of constant protest against them. They are also familiar with the fact of co-operating with others, and proposing to themselves a collective, not an individual interest as the aim (at least for the time being) of their actions. So long as they are co-operating, their ends are identified with those of others; there is at least a temporary feeling that the interests of others are their own interests. Not only does all strengthening of social ties, and all healthy growth of society, give to each individual a stronger personal interest in practically consulting the welfare of others; it also leads him to identify his *feelings* more and more with their good, or at least with an even greater degree of practical consideration for it. He comes, as though instinctively, to be conscious of himself as a being who *of course* pays regard to others. The good of others becomes to him a thing naturally and necessarily to be attended to, like any of the physical conditions of our existence. Now, whatever amount of this feeling a person has, he is urged by the strongest motives both of interest and of sympathy to demonstrate it, and to the utmost of his power encourage it in others; and even if he has none of it himself, he is as greatly interested as any one else that

others should have it. Consequently the smallest germs of the feeling are laid hold of and nourished by the contagion of sympathy and the influences of education; and a complete web of corroborative association is woven round it, by the powerful agency of the external sanctions. This mode of conceiving ourselves and human life, as civilisation goes on, is felt to be more and more natural. Every step in political improvement renders it more so, by removing the sources of opposition of interest, and levelling those inequalities of legal privilege between individuals or classes, owing to which there are large portions of mankind whose happiness it is still practicable to disregard. In an improving state of the human mind, the influences are constantly on the increase, which tend to generate in each individual a feeling of unity with all the rest; which, if perfect, would make him never think of, or desire, any beneficial condition for himself, in the benefits of which they are not included. If we now suppose this feeling of unity to be taught as a religion, and the whole force of education, of institutions, and of opinion, directed, as it once was in the case of religion, to make every person grow up from infancy surrounded on all sides both by the profession and the practice of it, I think that no one, who can realise this conception, will feel any misgiving about the sufficiency of the ultimate sanction for the Happiness morality. To any ethical student who finds the realisation difficult, I recommend, as a means of facilitating it, the second of M. Comte's two principal works, the *Traité de Politique Positive*. I entertain the strongest objections to the system of politics and morals set forth in that treatise; but I think it has superabundantly shown the possibility of giving to the service of humanity, even without the aid of belief in a Providence, both the psychological power and the social efficacy of a religion; making it take hold of human life, and colour all thought, feeling, and action, in a manner of which the greatest ascendancy ever exercised by any religion may be but a type and foretaste; and of which the danger is, not that it should be insufficient, but that it should be so excessive as to interfere unduly with human freedom and individuality.

Neither is it necessary to the feeling which constitutes the binding force of the utilitarian morality on those who recognise it, to wait for those social influences which would make its obligation felt by mankind at large. In the comparatively early state of human advancement in which we now live, a person cannot indeed feel that entireness of sympathy with all others, which would make any real discordance in the general direction of their conduct in life impossible; but already a person in whom the social feeling is at all developed, cannot bring himself to think of the rest of his fellow-creatures as struggling rivals with him for the means of happiness, whom he must desire to see defeated in their object in order that he may succeed in his. The deeply rooted conception which

every individual even now has of himself as a social being, tends to make him feel it one of his natural wants that there should be harmony between his feelings and aims and those of his fellow-creatures. If differences of opinion and of mental culture make it impossible for him to share many of their actual feelings—perhaps make him denounce and defy those feelings—he still needs to be conscious that his real aim and theirs do not conflict; that he is not opposing himself to what they really wish for, namely their own good, but is, on the contrary, promoting it. This feeling in most individuals is much inferior in strength to their selfish feelings, and is often wanting altogether. But to those who have it, it possesses all the characters of a natural feeling. It does not present itself to their minds as a superstition of education, or a law despotically imposed by the power of society, but as an attribute which it would not be well for them to be without. This conviction is the ultimate sanction of the greatest happiness morality. This it is which makes any mind, of well-developed feelings, work with, and not against, the outward motives to care for others, afforded by what I have called the external sanctions; and when those sanctions are wanting, or act in an opposite direction, constitutes in itself a powerful internal binding force, in proportion to the sensitiveness and thoughtfulness of the character; since few but those whose mind is a moral blank, could bear to lay out their course of life on the plan of paying no regard to others except so far as their own private interest compels.

Mill's contribution to the understanding of human freedom lies in his emphasis on the priority of reasonable inclination over obligation. Significant though obligation is in moral decision, its force is derivative and secondary. (Here is a striking anticipation of Freud's demonstration that the demands of the superego are traceable to instinctual elements in the personality.)

There is in Mill the strongest encouragement to realize that individual interest coincides with the interest of the whole society. But one finds little or no suggestion that obligation and inclination may fiercely contradict each other. In his general analysis of behavior, in spite of the differences noted, Mill stands closer to Kant than to some more recent conceptions of what creates genuine freedom within personality.

3. Soren Kierkegaard

1813-1855

(*For biographical notes and brief bibliography see p. 82.*)

"After the individual has given up every effort to find himself outside himself in existence, in relation to his surroundings, and when after that shipwreck he turns toward the highest things, the absolute, coming after such emptiness, not only bursts upon him in all its fullness but also in the responsibility which he feels he has."

Kierkegaard accepts in part Kant's description of obligation to a universal moral purpose, the sense of which is found in all human beings. But he does so with a difference. At a time when men generally considered their culture Christian, Kierkegaard sharply objected to the assumption that man is free to act according to the demands of reason, in behavior modeled on a universal standard. In Kierkegaard's view, the individual with his fragmentary knowledge of the totality of things can be truly free only by giving up the pretense that he is able to act with perfect rationality. The fully free person stands in contradictory relation to the universal understanding of reality. So also individual obligation is paradoxically related to the universal *telos* or "end" that compels every man. The freedom of faith comes into play as much in passion as in obligation.

Kierkegaard describes the transitions by which freedom is realized as three "stages on life's way." These are: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious, each representing an increasing depth of freedom without losing that of the previous stage. The aesthetically oriented man comes to greater freedom by subordinating all his interests to serve a single all-encompassing obligation, in the manner of Kant's respect for moral law. Thus the courtship between a man and a woman, for instance, is an aesthetic adventure. But it becomes deeper, greater, and more genuine as it comes to stand under the obligation of a lifelong promise to love and cherish.

Freedom is further widened at the religious stage, which has two dimensions. "Religion A" involves an internal movement of both inclination and obligation. Here there is an admission of shortcoming, or guilt, before the universal ethical requirement. It is the individual's acceptance of the reigning presence of ultimate reality. Kierkegaard speaks of a man of this type picturesquely as a "knight of infinite resignation." He then goes on to show the greater freedom of "Religion B." Here the individual comes into a relation of priority over the universal. Man recognizes his wonderful and awful freedom at the point of paradox. Standing in this relation to reality is the "knight of faith." (These various stages should

not be imagined in a fixed order. Kierkegaard seldom if ever speaks of them as an ascending sequence. Rather, they are moments or dimensions of freedom as it reveals itself in personal existence.)

The idea of paradox, as we have already seen in Part I, is basic in Kierkegaard's thought. The universal can be apprehended only in so far as it submits itself to the limitations of the finite. Therefore it can be present in the existing individual only as "hidden". To take on relationship to a universal that can never be fully expressed by an existing human being is to make a "leap"—to accept the "absurd." The freedom of faith is known only in holding to an objective uncertainty with infinite passion, with courage to face the void in "fear and trembling." Freedom can never escape this paradox.[1]

Kierkegaard's analysis of existence leads him to suggest that true freedom may involve a "teleological suspension of the ethical." Since no existing person can grasp the fullness of reality, no one can be fully ethical in the Kantian sense. To imagine the logic by which one acts as being made into universal rules implies comprehension of the universal. Here Kierkegaard turns the Kantian dictum upside down. Freedom is attained, he asserts, in being willing to stand on the frontier between what is circumstantial and fragmentary and imperfectly known, on the one hand, and what is universally obligatory on the other. He is quite satirical about "system builders" (an oblique reference to Hegel) who stand in God's place at the end of history. In so doing they only deceive themselves. For because of the limitations of existence, every instance of obligation may at some time have to be suspended in the freedom of faith. Freedom lives on the thin edge between the duties we always have and the breaking in of new situations.[2]

In the following selection Kierkegaard considers whether a universal rule is ever suspended in the individual case.

Ethics, he says, *is* universal—applies to everyone, all the time. He discusses the relation of the individual and particular to the universal, and comes to the paradox that the individual may become "superior to the universal." This is true only if he is faithful and at first subordinates him-

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[1] In Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* Abraham hears the voice of God, to whom he has given himself with infinite passion. But he cannot be certain that it is God who speaks, which is an agony to him. For the sacrifice required goes against all human understanding of right obligation.

[2] Existentialist writers have taken their clue from Kierkegaard's analysis. Dostoevski, Sartre, Heidegger, and John Wild, to mention only a few, emphasize the radical and paradoxical freedom within which man now lives. Reinhold Niebuhr's description of freedom rests directly upon the concept of paradox, as does that of Emil Brunner, whose phrase "the divine imperative" has a Kantian ring, however. Cf. Brunner's *The Divine Imperative* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), sec. II.

self to the universal. It is not possible to just anyone, on impulse. Thus the writer expounds his belief that a universalized ethic is not the last word. Beyond it (for we know only in part and see in part) is the possibility of a new demand of faith, going against the general ethic. Paradoxically, into that higher world, in individual situations, the ethically faithful may emerge. Here is something that remains "to all eternity a paradox, inaccessible to thought. And yet faith is this paradox . . . "

Abraham and the intended sacrifice of Isaac are an example of this "teleological suspension of the ethical." Yet Abraham represents faith. The writer considers other examples of sacrifice, biblical and classical (Iphigenia, Jephtha, Brutus, and so on). The instances are genuine. There is no question of imagining that (like Isaac) the heartbreakingly dear object of sacrifice will be returned after a show of obedience. The smaller (or universal) ethic of relation between father and son, father and daughter, is here engulfed in the larger (or universal) ancient ethic of sacrifice.

Abraham is different; he is outside the ethical and transgresses it—why? The answer is: "for God's sake because God required this proof of his faith; for his own sake . . . in order that he might furnish the proof." The relation of the two things, God and man, thus comes to a single focus in the "temptation." And the temptation here is the lesser ethic itself, "which would keep him from doing God's will." This individual situation and personal relation to deity is something the pagan hero does not know.

"He who denies himself and sacrifices himself for duty gives up the finite in order to grasp the infinite . . . that man is secure enough," says Kierkegaard. (Here we are still in the realm of rewards and punishments, however heightened or subtilized.) But Abraham "appalls me," the writer says. "He who gives up the universal in order to grasp something still higher which is not the universal—what is he doing? . . . And . . . what can save him?" Where is the envious eye which would not weep with Agamemnon? But "one cannot weep over Abraham." One approaches him rather with a certain horror.

And when the ethical, which in other cases finds fulfillment in a higher ethic, is thus suspended in Abraham, what is his condition? Is this sin? "How then did Abraham exist? He believed. This is the paradox which keeps him upon the sheer edge and which he cannot make clear to any other man . . . ."

Kierkegaard discusses at some length the question of justification. If Abraham is justified, it is not through anything universal, but "by virtue of being the particular individual." Most people like to judge others by results ("the answer of finiteness to the infinite query"). They "want to

know nothing about dread, distress, the paradox." They "flirt aesthetically with the result," and when they have heard it "they are edified." But Kierkegaard is not so taken with results as a measure of man. What happens to a man is like winning a lottery. This is not the same as what he *is* and *does*—"and there is surely no one who thinks that a man became great because he won the great prize in the lottery."

Circumstances dispose our lives one way or another. Yet every man has it in him to dream of the King's castle and to seek entrance to it. Here the writer goes to some trouble to show that any man may be capable of greatness, if he will suffer for it. Speaking of Mary the mother of Jesus, ". . . is it not true in this instance also that one whom God blesses He curses in the same breath? . . . . She has no need of worldly admiration, any more than Abraham has need of tears, for she was not a heroine, and he was not a hero, but both of them became greater than such. . . ."And he explains why, and sums up Abraham's paradox in pithy sentences.

Fear and Trembling, from which our excerpt is taken, appeared in Copenhagen in October 1843 under the pen name Johannes *De Silentio.* The book had an agonizing background. Two years earlier, for reasons of honor which he thought decisive, Kierkegaard had broken his engagement to a young woman with whom he was deeply in love. In order to free her from any hindering attachment, he deliberately led her to think he had been trifling with her. This work is one of two written in 1843 that reflect his struggle to give up what he loved most in the world. His diaries reveal that throughout these two years—a large part of which he spent in Germany—in spite of his struggle and in the midst of it, he was haunted by the recurrent hope that somehow, after all, he and Regina might marry.

The story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac is a poetic vehicle for his own experience and passionate inquiry into questions of ethics.[3] He retells the biblical incident in half a dozen briefly varied versions, followed by a commentary. Then he proposes to draw the implications from it in the form of certain problems. This is "in order to see what a tremendous paradox faith is, a paradox which is capable of transforming a murder into a holy act well-pleasing to God, a paradox which gave Isaac back to Abraham, which no thought can master, because faith begins precisely there where thinking leaves off." Our excerpt is the whole of Problem I.

(Reprinted from Søren Kierkegaard [in original, Johannes *De Silentio,* pseud.], *Fear and Trembling,* Walter Lowrie, trans. by permission of Princeton University Press [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,

[3] These personal details are from the translator's preface to the edition cited below.

1941], pp. 79–101, Problem I, "Is there such a thing as a teleological suspension of the ethical?" Reference marks refer to translator's footnotes. The single numbered note on p. 224 is the writer's.)

PROBLEM I
IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A TELEOLOGICAL SUSPENSION OF THE ETHICAL

The ethical as such is the universal, it applies to everyone, and the same thing is expressed from another point of view by saying that it applies every instant. It reposes immanently in itself, it has nothing without itself which is its *telos,** but is itself *telos* for everything outside it, and when this has been incorporated by the ethical it can go no further. Conceived immediately as physical and psychical, the particular individual is the particular which has its *telos* in the universal, and its task is to express itself constantly in it, to abolish its particularity in order to become the universal. As soon as the individual would assert himself in his particularity over against the universal he sins, and only by recognizing this can he again reconcile himself with the universal. Whenever the individual after he has entered the universal feels an impulse to assert himself as the particular, he is in temptation (*Anfechtung*), and he can labor himself out of this only by abandoning himself as the particular in the universal. If this be the highest thing that can be said of man and of his existence, then the ethical has the same character as man's eternal blessedness, which to all eternity and at every instant is his *telos,* since it would be a contradiction to say that this might be abandoned (i.e. teleologically suspended), inasmuch as this is no sooner suspended than it is forfeited, whereas in other cases what is suspended is not forfeited but is preserved precisely in that higher thing which is its *telos.*†

If such be the case, then Hegel is right when in his chapter on "The Good and the Conscience,"‡ he characterizes man merely as the particular and regards this character as "a moral form of the evil" which is to be annulled in the teleology of the moral, so that the individual who remains in this stage is either sinning or subjected to temptation (*Anfech-*

* A Greek word meaning end or goal—which S. K. writes with Greek letters but I transliterate because it is of such common occurrence, and also because it is in the way of becoming an English word.

† This is the conception of the ethical which is stressed in the Second Part of *Either/Or.* Perhaps Schrempf is right in affirming that what caused S.K. unnecessary agony was his acceptance of the Hegelian notion of the relation between the universal and the particular.

‡ Cf. *Philosophie des Rechts,* 2nd ed. (1840) §§ 129–141 and Table of Contents p. xix.

tung). On the other hand, he is wrong in talking of faith, wrong in not protesting loudly and clearly against the fact that Abraham enjoys honor and glory as the father of faith, whereas he ought to be prosecuted and convicted of murder.

For faith is this paradox, that the particular is higher than the universal—yet in such a way, be it observed, that the movement repeats itself, and that consequently the individual, after having been in the universal, now as the particular isolated himself as higher than the universal. If this be not faith, then Abraham is lost, then faith has never existed in the world . . . because it has always existed. For if the ethical (i.e. the moral) is the highest thing, and if nothing incommensurable remains in man in any other way but as the evil (i.e. the particular which has to be expressed in the universal), then one needs no other categories besides those which the Greeks possessed or which by consistent thinking can be derived from them. This fact Hegel ought not to have concealed, for after all he was acquainted with Greek thought.

One not infrequently hears it said by men who for lack of losing themselves in studies are absorbed in phrases that a light shines upon the Christian world whereas a darkness broods over paganism. This utterance has always seemed strange to me, inasmuch as every profound thinker and every serious artist is even in our day rejuvenated by the eternal youth of the Greek race. Such an utterance may be explained by the consideration that people do not know what they ought to say but only that they must say something. It is quite right for one to say that paganism did not possess faith, but if with this one is to have said something, one must be a little clearer about what one understands by faith, since otherwise one falls back into such phrases. To explain the whole of existence and faith along with it is easy, and that man does not make the poorest calculation in life who reckons upon admiration when he possesses such an explanation; for, as Boileau says, "*un sot trouve toujours un plus sot qui l'admire*" ["a fool can always find a bigger fool to admire him"].

Faith is precisely this paradox, that the individual as the particular is higher than the universal, is justified over against it, is not subordinate but superior—yet in such a way, be it observed, that it is the particular individual who, after he has been subordinated as the particular to the universal, now through the universal becomes the individual who as the particular is superior to the universal, for the fact that the individual as the particular stands in an absolute relation to the absolute. This position cannot be mediated, for all mediation comes about precisely by virtue of the universal; and it is and remains to all eternity a paradox, inaccessible to thought. And yet faith is this paradox—or else (these are the logical deductions which I would beg the reader to have *in mente* [in

mind] at every point, though it would be too prolix for me to reiterate them on every occasion)—or else there never has been faith . . . precisely because it always has been. In other words, Abraham is lost.

That for the particular individual this paradox may easily be mistaken for a temptation *(Anfechtung)* is indeed true, but one ought not for this reason to conceal it. That the whole constitution of many persons may be such that this paradox repels them is indeed true, but one ought not for this reason to make faith something different in order to be able to possess it, but ought rather to admit that one does not possess it, whereas those who possess faith should take care to set up certain criteria so that one might distinguish the paradox from a temptation *(Anfechtung)*.

Now the story of Abraham contains such a teleological suspension of the ethical. There have not been lacking clever pates and profound investigators who have found analogies to it. Their wisdom is derived from the petty proposition that at bottom everything is the same. If one will look a little more closely, I have not much doubt that in the whole world one will not find a single analogy (except a later instance which proves nothing), if it stands fast that Abraham is the representative of faith, and that faith is normally expressed in him whose life is not merely the most paradoxical that can be thought but so paradoxical that it cannot be thought at all. He acts by virtue of the absurd, for it is precisely absurd that he as the particular is higher than the universal. This paradox cannot be mediated; for as soon as he begins to do this he has to admit that he was in temptation (*Anfechtung*), and if such was the case, he never gets to the point of sacrificing Isaac, or, if he has sacrificed Isaac, he must turn back repentantly to the universal. By virtue of the absurd he gets Isaac again. Abraham is therefore at no instant a tragic hero but something quite different, either a murderer or a believer. The middle term which saves the tragic hero, Abraham has not. Hence it is that I can understand the tragic hero but cannot understand Abraham, though in a certain crazy sense I admire him more than all other men.

Abraham's relation to Isaac, ethically speaking, is quite simply expressed by saying that a father shall love his son more dearly than himself. Yet within its own compass the ethical has various gradations. Let us see whether in this story there is to be found any higher expression for the ethical such as would ethically explain his conduct, ethically justify him in suspending the ethical obligation toward his son, without in this search going beyond the teleology of the ethical.

When an undertaking in which a whole nation is concerned is hindered,* when such an enterprise is brought to a standstill by the disfavor

* The Trojan War. When the Greek fleet was unable to set sail from Aulis because of an adverse wind the seer Calchas announced that King Agamemnon had offended Artemis and that the goddess demanded his daughter Iphigenia as a sacrifice of expiation.

of heaven, when the angry deity sends a calm which mocks all efforts, when the seer performs his heavy task and proclaims that the deity demands a young maiden as a sacrifice—then will the father heroically make the sacrifice. He will magnanimously conceal his pain, even though he might wish that he were "the lowly man who dares to weep,"* not the king who must act royally. And though solitary pain forces its way into his breast, he has only three confidants among the people, yet soon the whole nation will be cognizant of his pain, but also cognizant of his exploit, that for the welfare of the whole he was willing to sacrifice her, his daughter, the lovely young maiden. O charming bosom! O beautiful cheeks! O bright golden hair! (v. 687). And the daughter will affect him by her tears, and the father will turn his face away, but the hero will raise the knife.—When the report of this reaches the ancestral home, then will the beautiful maidens of Greece blush with enthusiasm, and if the daughter was betrothed, her love will not be angry but be proud of sharing in the father's deed, because the maiden belonged to him more feelingly than to the father.

When the intrepid judge† who saved Israel in the hour of need in one breath binds himself and God by the same vow, then heroically the young maiden's jubilation, the beloved daughter's joy, he will turn to sorrow, and with her all Israel will lament her maiden youth; but every free-born man will understand, and every stout-hearted woman will admire Jephtha, and every maiden in Israel will wish to act as did his daughter. For what good would it do if Jephtha were victorious by reason of his vow if he did not keep it? Would not the victory again be taken from the nation?

When a son is forgetful of his duty,‡ when the state entrusts the father with the sword of justice, when the laws require punishment at the hand of the father, then will the father heroically forget that the guilty one is his son, he will magnanimously conceal his pain, but there will not be a single one among the people, not even the son, who will not admire the father, and whenever the law of Rome is interpreted, it will be remembered that many interpreted it more learnedly, but none so gloriously as Brutus.

If, on the other hand, while a favorable wind bore the fleet on with swelling sails to its goal, Agamemnon had sent that messenger who fetched Iphigenia in order to be sacrificed; if Jephtha, without being bound by any vow which decided the fate of the nation, had said to his daughter, "Bewail now thy virginity for the space of two months, for I

* See Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis,* v. 448 in Wilster's translation. Agamemnon says, "How lucky to be born in lowly station where one may be allowed to weep." The confidants mentioned below are Menelaus, Calchas and Ulysses. Cf. v. 107.

† Jephtha. Judges 11:30–40.

‡ The son of Brutus while his father was Consul took part in a conspiracy to restore the king Rome had expelled, and Brutus ordered him to be put to death.

will sacrifice thee"; if Brutus had had a righteous son and yet would have ordered the lictors to execute him—who would have understood them? If these three men had replied to the query why they did it by saying, "It is a trial in which we are tested," would people have understood them better?

When Agamemnon, Jephtha, Brutus at the decisive moment heroically overcome their pain, have heroically lost the beloved and have merely to accomplish the outward sacrifice, then there never will be a noble soul in the world who will not shed tears of compassion for their pain and of admiration for their exploit. If, on the other hand, these three men at the decisive moment were to adjoin to their heroic conduct this little word, "But for all that it will not come to pass," who then would understand them? If as an explanation they added, "This we believe by virtue of the absurd," who would understand them better? For who would not easily understand that it was absurd, but who would understand that one could then believe it?

The difference between the tragic hero and Abraham is clearly evident. The tragic hero still remains within the ethical. He lets one expression of the ethical find its *telos* in a higher expression of the ethical; the ethical relation between father and son, or daughter and father, he reduces to a sentiment which has its dialectic in the idea of morality. Here there can be no question of a teleological suspension of the ethical.

With Abraham the situation was different. By his act he overstepped the ethical entirely and possessed a higher *telos* outside of it, in relation to which he suspended the former. For I should very much like to know how one would bring Abraham's act into relation with the universal, and whether it is possible to discover any connection whatever between what Abraham did and the universal . . . except the fact that he transgressed it. It was not for the sake of saving a people, not to maintain the idea of the state, that Abraham did this, and not in order to reconcile angry deities. If there could be a question of the deity being angry, he was angry only with Abraham, and Abraham's whole action stands in no relation to the universal, is a purely personal undertaking. Therefore, whereas the tragic hero is great by reason of his moral virtue, Abraham is great by reason of a personal virtue. In Abraham's life there is no higher expression for the ethical than this, that the father shall love his son. Of the ethical in the sense of morality there can be no question in this instance. In so far as the universal was present, it was indeed cryptically present in Isaac, hidden as it were in Isaac's loins, and must therefore cry out with Isaac's mouth, "Do it not! Thou art bringing everything to naught."

Why then did Abraham do it? For God's sake, and (in complete identity with this) for his own sake. He did it for God's sake because God required this proof of his faith; for his own sake he did it in order that

he might furnish the proof. The unity of these two points of view is perfectly expressed by the word which has always been used to characterize this situation: it is a trial, a temptation (*Fristelse*).* A temptation—but what does that mean? What ordinarily tempts a man is that which would keep him from doing his duty, but in this case the temptation is itself the ethical . . . which would keep him from doing God's will.

Here is evident the necessity of a new category if one would understand Abraham. Such a relationship to the deity paganism did not know. The tragic hero does not enter into any private relationship with the deity, but for him the ethical is the divine, hence the paradox implied in his situation can be mediated in the universal.

Abraham cannot be mediated, and the same thing can be expressed also by saying that he cannot talk. So soon as I talk I express the universal, and if I do not do so, no once can understand me. Therefore if Abraham would express himself in terms of the universal, he must say that his situation is a temptation (*Anfechtung*), for he has no higher expression for that universal which stands above the universal which he transgresses.

Therefore, though Abraham arouses my admiration, he at the same time appalls me. He who denies himself and sacrifices himself for duty gives up the finite in order to grasp the infinite, and that man is secure enough. The tragic hero gives up the certain for the still more certain, and the eye of the beholder rests upon him confidently. But he who gives up the universal in order to grasp something still higher which is not the universal—what is he doing? Is it possible that this can be anything else but a temptation (*Anfechtung*)? And if it be possible . . . but the individual was mistaken—what can save him? He suffers all the pain of the tragic hero, he brings to naught his joy in the world, he renounces everything . . . and perhaps at the same instant debars himself from the sublime joy which to him was so precious that he would purchase it at any price. Him the beholder cannot understand nor let his eye rest confidently upon him. Perhaps it is not possible to do what the believer proposes, since it is indeed unthinkable. Or if it could be done, but if the individual had misunderstood the deity—what can save him? The tragic hero has need of tears and claims them, and where is the envious eye which would be so barren that it could not weep with Agamemnon; but where is the man with a soul so bewildered that he would have the presumption to weep for Abraham? The tragic hero accomplishes his act at a definite

* This is temptation in the sense we ordinarily attach to the word. For temptation in a higher sense (*Anfegtelse*) I have in the translation of other books used the phrase "trial of temptation." Professor Swenson, in an important passage in the *Postscript*, preferred to use the German word *Anfechtung*. In this work I have used "temptation" and added the German word in parenthesis. The distinction between the two sorts of temptation is plainly indicated by S. K. in this paragraph.

instant in time, but in the course of time he does something not less significant, he visits the man whose soul is beset with sorrow, whose breast for stifled sobs cannot draw breath, whose thoughts pregnant with tears weigh heavily upon him, to him he makes his appearance, dissolves the sorcery of sorrow, loosens his corslet, coaxes forth his tears by the fact that in his sufferings the sufferer forgets his own. One cannot weep over Abraham. One approaches him with a *horror religiosus,* as Israel approached Mount Sinai.—If then the solitary man who ascends Mount Moriah, which with its peak rises heaven-high above the plain of Aulis, if he be not a somnambulist who walks securely above the abyss while he who is stationed at the foot of the mountain and is looking on trembles with fear and out of reverence and dread dare not even call to him—if this man is disordered in his mind, if he had made a mistake! Thanks and thanks again to him who proffers to the man whom the sorrows of life have assaulted and left naked—proffers to him the fig-leaf of the word with which he can cover his wretchedness. Thanks be to thee, great Shakespeare, who art able to express everything, absolutely everything, precisely as it is—and yet why didst thou never pronounce this pang? Didst though perhaps reserve it to thyself—like the loved one whose name one cannot endure that the world should mention? For the poet purchases the power of words, the power of uttering all the dread secrets of others, at the price of a little secret he is unable to utter . . . and a poet is not an apostle, he casts out devils only by the power of the devil.

But now when the ethical is thus teleologically suspended, how does the individual exist in whom it is suspended? He exists as the particular in opposition to the universal. Does he then sin? For this is the form of sin, as seen in the idea. Just as the infant, though it does not sin, because it is not as such yet conscious of its existence, yet its existence is sin, as seen in the idea, and the ethical makes its demands upon it every instant. If one denies that this form can be repeated [in the adult] in such a way that it is not sin, then the sentence of condemnation is pronounced upon Abraham. How then did Abraham exist? He believed. This is the paradox which keeps him upon the sheer edge and which he cannot make clear to any other man, for the paradox is that he as the individual puts himself in an absolute relation to the absolute. Is he justified in doing this? His justification is once more the paradox; for if he is justified, it is not by virtue of anything universal, but by virtue of being the particular individual.

How then does the individual assure himself that he is justified? It is easy enough to level down the whole of existence to the idea of the state or the idea of society. If one does this, one can also mediate easily enough, for then one does not encounter at all the paradox that the individual as the individual is higher than the universal—which I can aptly express also by the thesis of Pythagoras, that the uneven numbers are more

perfect than the even. If in our age one occasionally hears a rejoinder which is pertinent to the paradox, it is likely to be to the following effect: "It is to be judged by the result." A hero who has become a σκάνδαλον* to his contemporaries because they are conscious that he is a paradox who cannot make himself intelligible, will cry out defiantly to his generation, "The result will surely prove that I am justified." In our age we hear this cry rather seldom, for as our age, to its disadvantage, does not produce heroes, it has also the advantage of producing few caricatures. When in our age one hears this saying, "It is to be judged according to the result," a man is at once clear as to who it is he has the honor of talking with. Those who talk thus are a numerous tribe, whom I will denominate by the common name of *Docents*.† In their thoughts they live secure in existence, they have a *solid* position and *sure* prospects in a well-ordered state, they have centuries and even milleniums between them and the concussions of existence, they do not fear that such things could recur—for what would the police say to that! and the newspapers! Their lifework is to judge the great, and to judge them according to the result. Such behavior toward the great betrays a strange mixture of arrogance and misery: of arrogance because they think they are called to be judges; of misery because they do not feel that their lives are even in the remotest degree akin to the great. Surely a man who possesses even a little *erectioris ingenii* [spark of initiative] has not become entirely a cold and clammy mollusk, and when he approaches what is great it can never escape his mind that from the creation of the world it has been customary for the result to come last, and that, if one would truly learn anything from great actions, one must pay attention precisely to the beginning. In case he who should act were to judge himself according to the result, he would never get to the point of beginning. Even though the result may give joy to the whole world, it cannot help the hero, for he would get to know the result only when the whole thing was over, and it was not by this he became a hero, but he was such for the fact that he began.

Moreover, the result (inasmuch as it is the answer of finiteness to the infinite query) is in its dialectic entirely heterogeneous with the existence of the hero. Or is it possible to prove that Abraham was justified in assuming the position of the individual with relation to the universal . . . for the fact that he got Isaac by *miracle*? If Abraham had actually sacrificed Isaac, would he then have been less justified?

But people are curious about the result, as they are about the result

* This is the Scriptural word which we translate by "offense" or "stumbling block." Only Mr. Dru has preferred to use the identical word "scandal."

† *Docents* and *Privatdocents* (both of them German titles for subordinate teachers in the universities) were very frequently the objects of S. K.'s satire. He spoke more frequently of "the professor" after Martensen had attained that title.

in a book—they want to know nothing about dread, distress, the paradox. They flirt aesthetically with the result, it comes just as unexpectedly but also just as easily as a prize in the lottery; and when they have heard the result they are edified. And yet no robber of temples condemned to hard labor behind iron bars, is so base a criminal as the man who pillages the holy, and even Judas who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver is not more despicable than the man who sells greatness.

It is abhorrent to my soul to talk inhumanly about greatness, to let it loom darkly at a distance in an indefinite form, to make out that it is great without making the human character of it evident—wherewith it ceases to be great. For it is not what happens to me that makes me great, but it is what I do, and there is surely no one who thinks that a man became great because he won the great prize in the lottery. Even if a man were born in humble circumstances, I would require of him nevertheless that he should not be so inhuman toward himself as not to be able to think of the King's castle except at a remote distance, dreaming vaguely of its greatness and wanting at the same time to exalt it and also to abolish it by the fact that he exalted it meanly. I require of him that he should be man enough to step forward confidently and worthily even in that place. He should not be unmanly enough to desire impudently to offend everybody by rushing straight from the street into the King's hall. By that he loses more than the King. On the contrary, he should find joy in observing every rule of propriety with a glad and confident enthusiasm which will make him frank and fearless. This is only a symbol, for the difference here remarked upon is only a very imperfect expression for spiritual distance. I require of every man that he should not think so inhumanly of himself as not to dare to enter those palaces where not merely the memory of the elect abides but where the elect themselves abide. He should not press forward impudently and impute to them kinship with himself; on the contrary, he should be blissful every time he bows before them, but he should be frank and confident and always be something more than a charwoman, for if he will not be more, he will never gain entrance. And what will help him is precisely the dread and distress by which the great are tried, for otherwise, if he has a bit of pith in him, they will merely arouse his justified envy. And what distance alone makes great, what people would make great by empty and hollow phrases, that they themselves reduce to naught.

Who was ever so great as that blessed woman, the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary? And yet how do we speak of her? We say that she was highly favored among women. And if it did not happen strangely that those who hear are able to think as inhumanly as those who talk, every young girl might well ask, "Why was not I too the highly favored?" And if I had nothing else to say, I would not dismiss such a question as

stupid, for when it is a matter of favor, abstractly considered, everyone is equally entitled to it. What they leave out is the distress, the dread, the paradox. My thought is as pure as that of anyone, and the thought of the man who is able to think such things will surely become pure—and if this be not so, he may expect the dreadful; for he who once has evoked these images cannot be rid of them again, and if he sins against them, they avenge themselves with quiet wrath, more terrible than the vociferousness of ten ferocious reviewers. To be sure, Mary bore the child miraculously, but it came to pass with her after the manner of women, and that season is one of dread, distress and paradox. To be sure, the angel was a ministering spirit, but it was not a servile spirit which obliged her by saying to the other young maidens of Israel, "Despise not Mary. What befalls her is the extraordinary." But the Angel came only to Mary, and no one could understand her. After all, what woman was so mortified as Mary? And is it not true in this instance also that one whom God blesses He curses in the same breath? This is the spirit's interpretation of Mary, and she is not (as it shocks me to say, but shocks me still more to think that they have thoughtlessly and coquettishly interpreted her thus)—she is not a fine lady who sits in state and plays with an infant god. Nevertheless, when she says, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord"—then she is great, and I think it will not be found difficult to explain why she became the Mother of God. She has no need of worldly admiration, any more than Abraham has need of tears, for she was not a heroine, and he was not a hero, but both of them became greater than such, not at all because they were exempted from distress and torment and paradox, but they became great through these.*

It is great when the poet, presenting his tragic hero before the admiration of men, dares to say, "Weep for him, for he deserves it." For it is great to deserve the tears of those who are worthy to shed tears. It is great that the poet dares to keep the crowd in awe, dares to castigate men, requiring that every man examine himself whether he be worthy to weep for the hero. For the waste-water of blubberers is a degradation of the holy.—But greater than all this it is that the knight of faith dares to say even to the noble man who would weep for him, "Weep not for me, but weep for thyself."

One is deeply moved, one longs to be back in those beautiful times, a sweet yearning conducts one to the desired goal, to see Christ wandering in the promised land. One forgets the dread, the distress, the paradox. Was it so easy a matter not to be mistaken? Was it not dreadful that this

* It would be interesting and edifying to make an anthology of the passages in which S. K. speaks of the Blessed Virgin; for surely no Protestant was ever so much engrossed in this theme, and perhaps no Catholic has appreciated more profoundly the unique position of Mary.

man who walks among the others—was it not dreadful that He was God? Was it not dreadful to sit at table with Him? Was it so easy a matter to become an Apostle? But the result, eighteen hundred years—that is a help, it helps to the shabby deceit wherewith one deceives oneself and others. I do not feel the courage to wish to be contemporary with such events, but hence I do not judge severely those who were mistaken, nor think meanly of those who saw aright.

I return, however, to Abraham. Before the result, either Abraham was every minute a murderer, or we are confronted by a paradox which is higher than all mediation.

The story of Abraham contains therefore a teleological suspension of the ethical. As the individual he became higher than the universal. This is the paradox which does not permit of mediation. It is just as inexplicable how he got into it as it is inexplicable how he remained in it. If such is not the position of Abraham, then he is not even a tragic hero but a murderer. To want to continue to call him the father of faith, to talk of this to people who do not concern themselves with anything but words, is thoughtless. A man can become a tragic hero by his own powers—but not a knight of faith. When a man enters upon the way, in a certain sense the hard way of the tragic hero, many will be able to give him counsel; to him who follows the narrow way of faith no one can give counsel, him no one can understand. Faith is a miracle, and yet no man is excluded from it; for that in which all human life is unified is passion,[1] and faith is a passion.

The impact of Kierkegaard upon modern thought lies in his perception of the fact that men can no longer act in the light of an easy consensus as to what constitutes universal moral rightness. Universal obligations give

[1] Lessing has somewhere given expression to a similar thought from a purely aesthetic point of view. What he would show expressly in this passage is that sorrow too can find a witty expression. To this end he quotes a rejoinder of the unhappy English king, Edward II. In contrast to this he quotes from Diderot a story of a peasant woman and a rejoinder of hers. Then he continues: "That too was wit, and the wit of a peasant at that; but the situation made it inevitable." Consequently one must not seek to find the excuse for the witty expressions of pain and of sorrow in the fact that the person who uttered them was a superior person, well educated, intelligent, and witty withal, *for the passions make all men again equal*—but the explanation is to be found in the fact that in all probability everyone would have said the same thing in the same situation. The thought of a peasant woman a queen could have had and must have had, just as what the king said in that instance a peasant too would have been able to say and doubtless would have said. *Cf. Sämtliche Werke,* XXX. p. 223.*

* In *Auszuge aus den Literatur-Briefen,* 81st letter, in Maltzahn's ed. Vol. vi, pp. 205 ff.

way to new directions born in our midst. The outlines of true freedom can no longer be discerned by a test of universalizing our own experience. The logic of ethics is one of individualization in given circumstances, rather than generalization keyed to the totality of things. Ethics no longer has to do with the fixed and static. We have now the linguistic analyst's search for the everyday meaning of ethical language, and the social scientist's study of cultural values. Thus attention is chiefly on the changing circumstances within which freedom must be born. Freedom, for Kierkegaard, lives in the kind of devotion that acts in the very midst of fragmentary and contradictory expectations. It is realized in a relationship of passion on the edge of obligation.

Kierkegaard's analysis is an attack on both lines of emphasis that came down from the medieval consensus. The attempt to gather empirically such information as will make men free is scorned because of the changeable and approximate character of facts. The other attempt, to find a universal and plainly rational freedom in a subjective world, is equally repudiated. For reason comes to grief on the paradoxical concept of the presence of the infinite in the finite. We live, consequently, in an objective world with constantly changing contexts. We may exercise personal freedom, but only by the paradoxical, passionate leap. No one can escape the knife-edge between inclination and obligation.

4. Ernst Troeltsch

1865-1923

German Protestant theologian and philosopher. Born in Augsburg, studied at Erlangen and Göttingen. During 1892–1915 was associate professor and professor at Bonn, Heidelberg, Berlin. Specialized in systematic theology, philosophy of religion, philosophy. In 1919–21 was secretary in the Prussian State Ministry of Worship and Education. Became leader of the "history of religions" school of thought and a pioneer in the philosophy of religion. Fertile writer and contributor to religious journals. Subjected the claims of revelation to critical investigation by sociological, psychological, and historical disciplines. Believed the type of piety created by Jesus must adjust to different cultural needs and values. Conclusively demonstrated that the Church helps to shape and is shaped by the cultural conditions of the time.

"It is . . . the personal and individual conscience which connects the system of cultural values with that of the morality of conscience—explaining and strengthening, and at the same time conditioning and limiting, the one by the other."

The pure, rigoristic ethic of Kant had not yet felt the impact of the existentialists and psychoanalysis when Ernst Troeltsch was rising to prominence. He launched a stinging criticism of the Kantian position, though he himself never really stepped outside the orbit of Kant's influence.[1] He insists that while a formal analysis of the categorical imperative may be valid in relation to oneself, it does not adequately cover one's responsibility to others. In the various social roles of life everyone has to make decisions involving actual values and expectations. These must depend on the history of social institutions rather than abstract formal analysis. Freedom therefore has two equally important defining aspects. These are: formal obligation toward oneself and historically conditioned obligations within the structures of society.

Although he attacked the "formal autonomous ethic of conviction," the

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Troeltsch's most influential work is The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, *Olive Wyon, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1931), a study of the sociological impact of Christianity upon Western culture.* Protestantism and Progress, *W. Montgomery, trans. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958),* is a similar *study of the sociological consequence of the Reformation for the modern world. The clearest summary of his thought is to be found in* Christian Thought, Its History and Application, *von Hügel, ed. (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).*

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[1] *Das Historische in Kants Religionsphilosophie* (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1904).

starting point for Troeltsch is a more or less Ritschlian version of the division between theoretical and practical reason so definitely set forth by Kant. Ritschl spoke of "value" rather than duty, and went on to say that man's ability to hold value and act upon it raises him uniquely above the level of natural impulse. In a similar way, Troeltsch assumes that the sense of duty, the power to discern and respond to value and be directed by purpose, lifts man above the level of unconscious and instinctual drives. Human personality is a center of *valuing* activity. That is its distinguishing quality.

The range of action of personality, however, cannot be limited to private decisions. It extends to and includes the institutions of society. When purpose and value dictate decisions made in social settings, then the family, the social economy, and other institutions are delivered from mere instinctual behavior. The family as a set of relationships depends upon purposeful direction of erotic tendencies. The economy proceeds from value-creating decisions as to economic needs. The state is built up by dutiful management of political forces.

Borrowing from Hegel and to some degree from Schleiermacher, Troeltsch finds the whole fabric of society woven by the interaction of inclination and obligation. But while personal decisions are relatively straightforward, social decisions can be made only in the context of the special conditions of history. Judgments involving institutional values cannot be made by means of abstract theory. They are valid only when based on careful practical understanding of the social milieu. Familiarity with circumstances, broad awareness of the past, and willingness to examine earlier social decisions and their consequences are essential to activity in the social realm.

Values are kept alive in a social context by compromise with given conditions. By this Troeltsch means that moral principles are effective only when modified according to the limitations of the situation in which they are applied. Whenever situation and principle are not genuinely related, both suffer. Effective decisions always bridge the gap between the absolute obligation of the individual and the historically conditioned values of society. Duty has a dual function: to combine what has since been designated by the phrase, "moral man and immoral society."[2]

Troeltsch depends somewhat on Hegel's modification of the Kantian view of inclination versus obligation. Hegel rejected the idea of a static opposition and tried to show the development of purpose through the conflict of human interests. The impact of one interest upon another gives rise to still larger expressions of purpose, in what Hegel calls the "cunning

[2] In Reinhold Niebuhr's book by that title (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932).

of reason." Troeltsch also believes that value arises out of, and in turn gives shape to, the various interests that move a culture. At times, values are a mere empty or confused reflection of the conflict of social interests. At other times they really do shape and direct the driving interests of society. Troeltsch's best-known work, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*,[3] is devoted largely to the study of historical instances when the social doctrines of Christianity have had actual effect on social organization. It deals also with contrasting occasions which produced nothing more than a pale reflection of institutional needs.[4]

Troeltsch criticizes Herrmann for finding in the New Testament ethic only the subjective value of personality. The kingdom of God is thus reduced to an assemblage of (as it were) isolated individuals. Each acts according to his own intuition of the universal good. According to Troeltsch the kingdom is rather to be found in the family, industry, the state, and so on. This is true to the extent that the values of personality enter into the interweaving decisions that create such institutions. Sin often depersonalizes individuals by destroying the social fabric of personality. The kingdom of God renews the social context in which the true values of personality are formed.

Freedom is intimately related to the way in which the process of social change shifts the patterns of interpersonal expectations. This thinker is among the first to sound the note that was picked up by the social gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch.[5] Troeltsch's most significant influence must be seen in the way he directed Christians to a new sense of social responsibility. Obligation is genuine only when it gives up its detachment and acts intimately amid the network of inclinations and pressures that constitutes society. Unless personality lives by close compromise with the historically conditioned human interests of the moment, its "value" begins to die.

Troeltsch begins the following selection by pointing out, in addition to many phases of personal obligation, important *objective* moral values involved in man's institutions. The drives from which these values spring require the help and shaping idea of a moral good, for if grasped at for the mere satisfaction of passing needs they deteriorate into external and shallow forms. The religious element in particular must find ethical

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[3] Olive Wyon, trans., 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938).

[4] This method has been used on the American scene by H. Richard Niebuhr in *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1954), which shows how religious institutions have been shaped by social forces. A companion volume, *The Kingdom of God in America*, 1956, explores instances when Christianity has had an actual effect upon social organization.

[5] Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1917).

expression or be debased into mere custom, "revelry," or dogma. Religion is an independent factor in life, with its own happiness and pain. It does not proceed from morality, but *becomes* morality "in a two-fold movement." (1) It draws ethical imperatives to itself, and "the divinity is ethicized." And (2) it sets the ultimate goals of human morality in the divine. Among higher religions only Christianity knows that "the communion of individual will with God's will is a positive good."

The discipline of ethics, Troeltsch thinks, must be able to discern and describe ethical practices in direct experience and classify them. Ethics (we have seen) falls into two groups: subjective and objective. In the latter for the first time it now moves toward reality, away from "universal concepts." In its historical aspect, ethics can discern primary purposes of mankind that are only historically disclosed. True, a realistic ethic will lose its certainty. For certainty is not possible in detailed application but only in underlying concepts. But it must nevertheless turn to experience to classify moral situations and opinions. Only thus can it make proper evaluations for the formation of personality.

Kant's starting point of individual purpose should be retained, and then observed as it operates in history. "In this way an historical understanding of morality comes into its own for the first time." Troeltsch discusses as some length the nature of objective values so discerned, and the harmony or conflict of worldly and religious purposes. Neither, he believes, can do without the other.

He then considers the question of whether one can identify Kant's "ethics of conviction" with the Christian moral ideal. The fact is, he thinks, that one cannot. To do so would be to misinterpret the meaning and spirit of the gospel. Kant is actually closer to the Stoics.

Here the writer embarks on a discussion of the moral community, which he describes in detail. The Golden Rule, "Do unto others . . ." is not meant literally, but (read in context) more as a rebuke to hypocrisy. Christian love "is grounded in the kinship and community of all who believe in God." It "has its foundation in a common consent to the divine purpose." But this is everywhere to be seen as a personal, individual purpose moving side by side and interwoven with the communal. Both spring from love of and submission to God. Troeltsch ends by expounding what the gospel of love really means in dedication, social purpose, and self-discipline.

The following passages are from *Grundprobleme der Ethik (Fundamental Problems of Ethics)*, one of Troeltsch's earlier works. It already anticipates, however, the doctrines that were to become so influential in the liberalism of the twentieth century. It was first published in 1902 in a theological journal. The whole treatise is a criticism of Wilhelm Herrmann's *Ethics,* which had appeared the previous year. The excerpt given

below gets to the heart of the argument: namely, that Herrmann—and Kant before him—ignored the whole realm of social institutions and values.

(From Ernst Troeltsch, *Grundprobleme der Ethik* [*Fundamental Problems of Ethics*], originally published in *Zeitscrift fur Theologie und Kirche* in 1902 and reprinted in Troeltsch's *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. II [Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1913], pp. 618–35. Translated for this volume by D. E. Miller. Footnotes are the writer's.)

THE FORMAL AUTONOMOUS ETHIC OF CONVICTION AND THE OBJECTIVE TELEOLOGICAL ETHIC OF VALUE

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We distinguish with regard to moral experience the *duties* that proceed purely from the relations of the subject to itself and to other subjects—courage, prudence, and truthfulness, etc., on the one hand, and good will, justice, piety, etc., on the other—from the *obligations* to estimate and strive after objective values of the family, the state, the society, science, art and religion. We recognize also in these latter values something that is not eudaemonistic, but of objective and ideal worth. Here is something that must be sought after with the greatest sacrifice, something for which man is obligated to struggle, and which can be realized only through constant self-discipline and self-conquest. We also recognize that these objective moral values have their subjective and objective sides exactly like subjective values, in that devotion to objective values becomes a personal concern that is nearly always bound to the recognition and claim of the same values upon others. Thus the analogy of the subjective and objective obligations is complete, and only with the two together can we show the relationship to experience of the moral idea that is necessary in itself. This idea must be established over against the flux of experience as the center of virtue and duty that regulates the relationship of the subject to itself and to others. On the other hand the moral idea must be found in objective values which are separate from physical and psychological necessities, but which are effected through ethical decisions. It is not necessary to derive the duality of the moral conscience from the concept of an absolutely necessary purpose. It is enough to show that this duality arises in an application of the moral idea to experience, on the one hand out of the relationship of the subject to himself and to others, and on the other hand out of the purposes which are instinctually presented by nature, but which are elevated by the moral idea to the level of necessary moral values.

One may not because of this reply that every value is a natural product of human activity. For in so far as values are natural processes

that have their ground in physical conditions and needs, or in psychological situations and drives, they are unformed urges that must be shaped by the idea of a moral good. Otherwise they achieve no meaningful representation whatsoever. Out of the sexual drive is formed the ethical idea of the community of personalities in the family. Out of the social drive comes the community of personalities in the state. Out of the drives for nourishment and for ownership is formed the ethical idea of the order of production and of ownership. Out of esthetic experience is formed the idea of a higher world which is glimpsed occasionally in works of art. Out of curiosity and need for orientation is formed the idea of a science that seeks the truth independent of all personal interests. Out of religious convictions and experiences is formed the conscious and willful devotion of an integrated life with God.

Similarly one may not object that such values are the expression of eudaemonistic desires to satisfy human needs, even though these be the "higher needs." On the one hand the idea of morality is not thinkable without the perception of value, but "ideal feelings of desire" must be differentiated from the merely relative and accidental desires for worth. On the other hand the worthful coerciveness of social values does not rest upon the pleasure that is granted in them. It rests upon their objective necessity, by virtue of which they too take part in the formally necessary character of morality. Taken together they are a moving force against natural egoism, inertia, sensualness, and reduction to the merely given and the immediately factual. To be achieved they require exertion and devotion to the object for the sake of the inner, necessary worth of the object. They deteriorate when they are considered to be merely useful or simply a consequence of the drive toward self activation, i.e., when they are considered to be eudaemonistic or evolutionary. The family becomes merely an orderly form of sexual desire, a narrow-minded pleasantry, a pecuniary fiction. The nation-state becomes merely the police protection of material prosperity or an arena of honorable greed. Corporate manufacture and production becomes a mere competitive struggle and a hunt for the dollar. Art turns into mere entertainment and caprice. Science becomes a way to pass the time and a kind of idleness. Religion is then mere revelry and dogmatism. The principles of subjective morality can do absolutely nothing to stave off this deterioration. The only protection is the recognition that these purposes taken in themselves have the character of necessity, that they are to be recognized as the means by which personality is formed, and that therefore they have objective worth.

At this point we should emphasize that the religious element of life belongs to those drives that are simply given, and that this element needs above all else to find ethical expression. It must be raised out of the realm of the merely usual and the customary into the sphere of the required

and the objectively necessary. This is decisive for proper understanding of religion and its relationship to morality. The religious element is an independent element of life with its own happiness and its own pain. It is an experience and a conviction that is not produced, but is experienced. Therefore it does not proceed from morality as the recognition of immanental moral presuppositions or as sanction and guarantee. Its relationship to morality is for the most part a completely different one. It consists primarily of that experience whose best interpretation, independent in itself, is clothed in cult and myth. Mysticism is already an abstraction and is destructive to naïve religious groups.

The greater the power of the gods becomes, the greater is the push toward righteous and moral order under the power, control and protection of the divine beings. On the other hand the striving for religious values, purity, divine blessing, and the imitation of divinity becomes an obligation which manifests the intrinsic and essentially imperative character of religion. Religion becomes morality in a two-fold movement. On the one hand the ethical imperatives are attracted by it and this means that the divinity is ethicized. On the other hand the highest goal and good is set in the moral will of the divine community. The differences in the higher religions lies in the fact that only one of them knows that the communion of individual will with God's will is a positive good, while the others all see only a negative dissolution of the soul into God. It is the authenticity of the prophetic Christian religion to move in the first direction.*

Ethics is divided into two primary groups: subjective and objective ethics. Indeed the general analysis of ethics can be satisfied with the concept of formally necessary and absolute purpose. Thereby light has

* It is probably at this point that the primary difference between Herrmann and myself lies. For him every religion which does not arise out of the ethical is taken as superstition and Christianity is the only religion capable of the realization of morality. Therefore Christianity alone is a religion in the true sense of the word. For that reason he has no philosophy of religion, since there is only one religion, namely Christianity. From this position there is only one science, i.e., theology. In so far as theology seeks a general relevance, it can be found only in ethics, and indeed in an ethics that recognizes only a subjective principle of autonomy and receives in Christianity the enabling capacity to fulfill the subjective principle. For that reason the ethical element of Christianity is allowed to stand only in subjective autonomy, to which it brings the releasing power. Thereby Jesus is the proclaimer of moral autonomy, and brotherly love is the consequence of this autonomy. Certainly this is now becoming evident with the prevalence in Christianity since then of the sickness which comes from the transcendental interpretation of the highest good, and with the hopeless bewilderment concerning Christianity's relevance to culture. Indeed this began with Luther. Concerning Herrmann's position toward mysticism, compare the very accurate interpretation of Fresenius, "Der Versuch einer mystischen Begründung der Religion und die Geschichtliche Religion," 1912.

been thrown upon the much misunderstood fundamental basis of ethics, the misunderstanding of which could completely corrupt the whole of ethics and of moral practice. But ethics dare not halt at the position that every man acts according to his own opinion and upon every occasion in obedience to what appears to him to be a universal demand. Ethics must delineate practices that are located directly in experience and it must reduce these practices to their basic principles and classifications. It must discover classifications from the totality of historical experience. It will then distinguish between subjective and objective ethics, and within the latter it will in turn attempt to comprehend the primary ethical purposes that are historically disclosed. Then for the first time ethics will move toward reality and away from the theory of universal concepts, away from the formulation of an aprioristically validated, unconditioned, and unified purpose, which though it is determinative for the total character of ethics, allows for no kind of practical regulation.

With its relationship to experience and to the judgments that arise out of experience, a realistic ethic admittedly will lose its certainty about fundamental concepts and will be turned toward a proper evaluation of provisional behavior for the purpose of the formation of personality. It will be of no avail to search after the common fund of ethical wisdom, which is carried along in popular speech, and which is represented in the authority of the great moral teachers and personalities. Absolute certainty is possible completely and solely in the underlying concept. Certainty is not possible in the particularity of its application. This is evident in that Kant had to commit himself to the subjective judgment of the individual, i.e., to an unbreakable principle. But this uncertainty corresponds completely to ethical reality, which in the last analysis is risk and resolution resting upon circumspection and reflection. Then, too, the merely subjective certainty of judgment which Kant requires is in countless cases never actually realized. What is left for him is often an attachment to everyday moral judgments or to authorities, either of which is taken over with the best understanding and in good conscience. Herein probabilism retains an undeniable and unassailable entrenchment. Ethics rests upon an a priori idea that permeates experience, but ethics cannot work with that idea alone. Ethics must turn to experience to collect and classify the moral opinions that proceed from the ethical idea. When possible ethics must bring these opinions into the appropriate gradation of what is more nearly right, the criterion being their contribution to the depth and strength of the formation of personality. But in this case ethics will make a distinction between subjective and objective morality and must thereby analyze and classify historically the purposes that proceed from objective morality.

This elaboration of the Kantian ethics is nothing other than the affirmation of the critique that Schleiermacher—in part also Hegel—applies to Kant. It is the conjoining of Kant's subjective ethic with Schleiermacher's objective ethic. In spite of the close attachment of Schleiermacher's objective values to a very pale and abstract concept of reason and in spite of the dialectical artistry in the derivation of eight conceptions of value from the essence of reason, Schleiermacher's critique of the Kantian ethic is fully justified in its fundamental outlines. It is not necessary to resign oneself with Schleiermacher to the realm of abstract speculation about the spirit. It is much more necessary to remain with Kant's starting point for the analysis, to derive the structure of the formal command from the idea of an autonomous rational purpose and then further to draw out the objective values empirically from history, where they have developed and where they are constantly worked out according to their own necessity. In this way an historical understanding of morality comes into its own for the first time. In so far as morality is concerned simply with the universally valid and necessary character of moral purpose and with general considerations about the formation of personality, to that extent morality is in principle nonhistorical and in all times and places identical in its fundamental outlines. In their underlying principles the commands of subjective morality are unambiguous and are thereby subject only to trivial historical deviations. From this point of view morality has only distinctions in clarity, consequences and stringency, but no essential contrasts in principle. This is not at all true for objective values, which develop in the reality of history and which in the "heteronomy of purpose" are to be separated from natural forms and eudaemonistic values. It is appropriate at this point to recognize the primary formations that are a product of history: family, state, economy, science, art, and religion. Each of these values has its own developmental history in which its essence and particularity are revealed. At the same time the relationship of these values, the struggle for continuity and unity, has its own history, which of course is closely related to each of them separately. The goal of history cannot therefore be an abstractly unitary idea, i.e., reason, but can be only a concretely structured system of values. The question of the elaboration of this system of values becomes for us the most important question.

Therefore the primary questions of ethics do not lie in the realm of subjective ethics, which is relatively simple, but in the realm of objective ethics, which is relatively difficult and entangled. Objective ethics requires a comprehensive, historical vision, insight into the movement and the growth of culture and into the formation of moral values. It asks the question of the formation of every single purpose in itself and especially

the question of the conceptualization of the relationship of these values to one another.*

The harmonization of these values, as it is completed at different levels, is the locus of moral development and serves to distinguish different periods. Hereby a fundamental distinction becomes noticeable and this distinction applies to all primary ethical formations. On the one hand there are worldly purposes, which vary greatly and are often in conflict, but which are bound together by the common direction of the purpose whose object and locus the world is. On the other hand there stands the religious purpose with its concentration of all activity upon the reconciliation of the individual and the society in God, with its summoning all power and thought to one single, final, enduring and eternal purpose, in relation to which all other purposes are temporary. This dichotomy comes to the fore in a stronger formation of the various realms of ethics; but even so, it presents itself directly and necessarily throughout. Herein arises the highest, final, and most difficult problem of ethics. There is really an ethic *sub specie temporis* and an ethic *sub specie aeternitatis.* With the limitation of ethics to the merely formal realm one does not notice this opposition or else one must interpret it as meaningless or false. When one attends to the actual complication of ethical problems, it becomes the most important fact. These two directions in ethics are often in sharp enmity as immanental and transcendental ethics, or as cultural and ascetic ethics. But each searches the other out again because each without the other atrophies; the one excess needs the other. The religious establishment of purpose becomes narrow, and short-sighted without relationship to the world, or else it turns utopian; the establishment of purpose within the world becomes flat and purposeless without a relationship to a purpose which conceives all others within itself and

* The most important consideration is that next to the principle of an autonomous subjective ethic I introduce a second principle, one which is far more important for the understanding of religious ethics, i.e., the principle of objective values. This principle directs us to history, from whence we can alone derive these values, if we are not to follow the scholastic attempt of Schleiermacher, who derived them out of the essence of reason in the intersection of organization and symbolization with universality and individuality. In the preface to the third edition of my work Herrmann has shown agreeable interest, but he understands it as a mere demand to bear in mind the historical changes of Christianity in relation to culture. That has not been his problem for he finds in history only changing forms of life. "These changing forms of life cannot form the object of ethics. They can at any time become the means to self-centeredness; thus they can be present when there is no trace of morality." I would agree with that, but I understand morality somewhat differently. Morality is not simply autonomy, but is also objective value. I see the meaning of religion for religious ethics essentially in its character as objective value.

which is self-determining. The establishment of the proper balance between these two becomes the task of moral activity and moral insight.

Therefore I have already anticipated what follows in order to point out the consequence and the meaning of the underlying idea. At this point lies my main contention with Herrmann's formulation, and from this point all other points of disagreement are somewhat clarified, especially my insistence that history receives so little actual attention in his analysis in spite of the fact that he emphasizes it in principle. However, the other points of contention are not derived simply from this first, but are presented independently in the treatment of each problem. The fact that this is true across the board gives me what I consider the best reason for the right to develop another point of view over against that of Herrmann.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHIC TO THE KANTIAN ETHIC OF FORMAL AUTONOMY

The second main question is that of the appropriateness of identifying the Christian moral ideal with that of the formal Kantian ethics of conviction.* The question is a purely historical one and must be answered

* Compare Ehrhardt, *Der Grundcharakter der Ethik Jesu im Verhältnis zu dem messianischen Hoffnungen seiner Zeit,* 1895; Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums,* pp. 50–79. I cannot completely agree with Harnack's presentation; for Ehrhardt compare the criticism of Wrede, *Theol. L. Z.* 1896, pp. 75–79. In the meanwhile I have presented my own conception of the ethical preaching of Jesus in my *Soziallehren,* pp. 33–48. Harnack ("Das Urchristentum u. die soziale Frage," *Preuss. Jahrbb.,* 1908, and "Aus Wissenchaft und Leben" II, pp. 253–273) has criticized my conception of brotherly love and has interpreted it in a more social way, similar to Herrmann, who goes even further to derive Christian socialism from the conception of autonomy. Wernle, "Vorlaeufige Anmerkungen" in *Z. Th. K.* vigorously agrees with this. I am not convinced of the appropriateness of such a claim. I am much more of the opinion that the understanding of the gospel and its historical effects is clarified at this very point. Precisely the ascetic tendency of the gospel speaks in favor of this, and this ascetic tendency is very predominant, which is to say that honor, right, and passion are extinguished in submission to God. This is also upheld by the spirit of the way of loving delineated in the gospel, which is not concerned with practical effects, but with revelational conviction. Naturally the motivation of this highest good which conditions all else is very much under the influence of eschatology. F. J. Schmidt agrees with me in "Gottesliebe und Nächstenliebe," *Preuss. Jahrbb.* 1908. The fine treatment of A. Zillessen, "Die Begründung der sittlichen Forderungen bei Jesus u. Paulus," *Theol. Arbeiten des rhein. Predigervereins,* 1902, moves in a similar direction. In the meanwhile Naumann's "Briefe über die Religion," 1903, represents a standpoint which is very much related to my whole construction. Perhaps he traces the ethos of Jesus too much to the situation in Galilee. The authentic basis of this ethos lies in the religious inwardness of Jesus. But in any case one may say that such an inwardness with its naïveté and quiet was possible only in Galilee but then, too, Jesus removed the fullness of the ideal into the future. The

directly from history without any apologetic and dogmatic side glances, nor with any reference to a moral ideal that is presumed to be true. But then the identity (of Christian and Kantian ethics) must be seriously questioned. Such an identification is an unusual misinterpretation of the real meaning and spirit of the gospel, and is completely impossible according to the current historical conception of the New Testament. Herrmann indeed perceived the authentic meaning of the gospel to be very different from the Kantian ethic, and though he could not make use of the authentic meaning by such a comparison, he managed to reintroduce it again by various devices. The comparison itself, which dominates his whole conceptual construction, is totally incorrect.

Indeed it is not completely false; it is only thoroughly one-sided. Properly understood, it touches upon a thread of meaning in the gospel, but even so this is only a single theme and not the decisive consideration. That which with some justification is singled out is a presupposition behind the morality of the gospel, i.e., the spirit of inner freedom and of conviction of ethical necessity that should follow known purposes with inner joy and certainty. Here is the heart of the struggle of Jesus against the righteousness of the Pharisees and against their almost anxious, self-righteous legalism. The Pauline phrase that whatever does not proceed from faith is sin concentrates this thought with complete accuracy. Indeed one can say that autonomy as a presupposed character trait for moral action has never been so graphically presented, at least by practical proclamation, as in the preaching of Jesus. Whoever allows Jesus' preaching to move him with the totality of its real spirit will not consider His emphasis upon the final divine reward for good behavior as a denial or a restriction of this spirit. This reward is equally for all in the Kingdom of God, and as the final purpose and consequence of human history is left fully to the grace of God.

Yet the gospel is not exhausted by this idea. It does not simply lift up a formal possibility of proper behavior implicit in the idea of autonomy. The gospel does not leave the application of the moral idea within the conditions of experience simply to each person in complete freedom. In that case ethical behavior would consist of carrying out one's own opinion of what is universally necessary and valid according to the criterion of one's own moral insight. Therefore the gospel would have been restrictive from the beginning with respect to the actual experience belonging to culture in part because of the special necessities of vocation, and in part because of the heathen character of the culture. Jesus would then

different motive of the ethos is certainly a matter of feeling, and as such may not be demonstrated philosophically. However, that his brotherly love is not intended to be philanthropic nor merely ethical, but instead to be religious, is a fact that proceeds clearly from the whole material.

have proclaimed a very useless and very dull morality which hands over to each individual his own ethical orientation and leaves completely open the most important matter, namely what is to be done. Then Stoic morality, to which Kantian ethics stands closer than it does to Christianity, would be more nearly the consequence. But this completely formal character is not at all suitable to the Christian ethic. Quite the contrary, and with a sharp and completely overwhelming decisiveness Jesus declares a concrete goal and purpose, which in His affirmation produces the kind of activity that flows freely from the conscience.

This very fact indicates the alteration that Herrmann has undertaken by identifying the Kantian moral law with Christianity. Kantian autonomy leaves individual and social morality in counterbalance, and construes the state, the fundamental type of the moral community, to be that realm in which the co-existence of the freedom of each individual with the moral order is secured. The Kingdom of God, as he recognized it, is only the same idea at a higher level where free inner insight, rather than coercion and legality, establishes the ideal of mutual social values. If Herrmann pays no regard to this, but emphasizes the absolute subordination of the individual to the community and affirms the essence of the moral law in a love that restlessly and unconditionally offers itself to the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, then he has thereby really taken up another idea than mere autonomy. How can this absolute subordination of the individual to the community be derived from a concept of autonomy that takes as its central starting point the independent individual, and that sees all relationships to community ruled by the independent individual? Is it possible to clarify the importance of the purpose of the community at all without concrete presuppositions about the limitation and transience of the individual and about some greater, more objective reality that unites the various individual existences? Is this idea conceivable without the establishment of the moral claim of an overpowering purpose of God that raises the individual into a larger, eternal life process, which originates in communion with God, and which, in virtue of God's relationship to the whole, can appear only as the common goal of mankind? I believe that the answer is self-evident. What is revealed in the emphasis upon the social side of the gospel ethic is nothing else than the specification of an objective purpose and the convergence of this purpose with a metaphysical or religious view of the world. The concept of the insignificance of the creation in comparison to the eternal God is united with the idea of a special divine purpose that belongs to the wholeness of the world and that takes the individual up into itself.

Now from this vantage point the true character of Christian ethics comes clearly into view for the first time. The really special character of Christian ethics disappears when it is understood in the way that Herr-

mann does. His whole interpretation is itself a strong overemphasis and we discuss it here because of the necessity of establishing a genuinely Christian foundation in contrast to other points of view. One cannot establish the center of the ethics of Jesus in that oft-quoted passage, Matt. 7:12 "Whatsoever you would that people do to you, do so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." The gospel ethic would then be reduced to what was focused upon by the natural law thought of Scholasticism and later became the central idea of Utilitarianism and Positivism. According to the whole spirit of the preaching of Jesus and according to the context of the passage it can only mean: "Do not be hypocritical by requiring things of others that you yourself are not prepared to do, thereby finding a splinter in the eye of the other and not noticing the log in your own. God knows the heart and knows that all the fine claims you make of others are of no moral value at all when you do not place them first of all upon yourself." Love has a completely different foundation, namely thanks to the Lord who has forgiven everyone his great guilt and who therefore looks upon guilt between men as an affront to his goodness. The ground of love is in the perfect goodness of the Father, who allows His sun to shine upon the just and the unjust and who therefore claims the same goodness and patience from His children. The foundation of Christian love is in the negation of all worldly advantages and goodness in the common acknowledgement of the One. This love is grounded in the kinship and community of all who believe in God, strive after the Kingdom of God, and are brothers, not by being created of the same nature, but as children elected by the same Father. In summary this love has its foundation in a common consent to the divine purpose.

At the same time it must be said that this common purpose is everywhere manifest as a personal, individual purpose, which along with the love commandment establishes the eternal worth of the soul, in that submission to God raises the soul out of the transitory world into the sphere of eternal worth. At all times in the ethic of Jesus the individual purpose stands next to the purpose of the whole community. Just as the purpose of the whole community proceeds out of the common call of all to take part in the grace and goodness of God, so also the purpose of the individual proceeds out of the self-denying submission to the One Holy God, and for His sake to the brother, i.e., it proceeds out of love of God and love of the brother. So both communal and individual aspects of moral purpose arise in close relationship with one another out of the objective value of the Kingdom of God, which is at the same time achieved and upheld in a subjective act of freedom. The classic scriptural reference for the ethos of Jesus is His answer to the question about the greatest commandment, Matt. 22:37–40: "You shall love the Lord your

God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. That is the first commandment. But a second is like unto it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Upon these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The command to love God—if we speak now in the language of ethical categories—implies nothing else than the obligation to act according to the individual purpose of the worth of the soul, which is to be gained by love of and submission to God. The claim to love the neighbor—speaking again in similar categories—is nothing less than the obligation to act according to the social purpose of establishing a community among all God's children. It is proper to gather everyone into this community through the demonstration of the most real love and thereby with respect to the source and goal of true love, and to establish everyone in the boundless brotherhood of a family-like community.

Not only in this verse, but in all others the duality of the great commandment comes to light in the word and the meaning of the preaching of Jesus according to its foundation in an objective purpose. On the one hand "purity of heart" and on the other hand "love" receives the promise of beatitude. The claim "to self-discipline and to love," "to asceticism and to love," is given by Naumann as the content of all morality. The first is the sanctification of the whole person for God, that is to say not in religious and cultic acts, but in the moral foundation of personality, in complete purity before God. To will to behold God in his full Lordship, to stand before his judgment and with a pure heart devoid of every foreign thought, to will nothing other than to be found blameless before Him; this is the constant effort of the soul toward the eternal and the everlasting. The true course of life is this: to be separated from all transience, sensuousness, and distress in the continuous consciousness of undisturbed communion with God, and to live before the searching eye of God with completely open thoughts and desires. In such an attitude all the other virtues of piety are also given. Perfect sincerity and truthfulness are contained in the fact that one's heart is constantly before the eye of God. Patience lies in the fact that one stands constantly in his nakedness, weakness, and smallness before the Almighty. Childlike spontaneity and lack of timidity are implied in the attitude that at all times one should trust God and should submit himself to Him. The most painful force of conscience comes from the knowledge that one must account for all his words and deeds before God. The deepest earnestness of life arises from the realization that one's life is a trusted gift from God, from which he must bring increase, while he dare not mistake the narrow way nor dare he overestimate his strength for fighting the battle. Simplicity comes from complete release from all earthly desires that pull one away from and set one at variance with God, especially the comfort of riches,

of sensual love, and of the joys of life, which the Christian should receive as though he did not have them. Independence and persistence in God enable the pious man in his sonship to flaunt all irritations and frustrations, and he would rather pass through life with one eye rather than betray his own soul. Sobriety and self-control come only from complete watchfulness and complete freedom from the rush of the flesh, wherein one can pursue the highest tasks of holiness and can expect the breaking in of the Kingdom. The deepest spiritual-mindedness is rooted in the fact that a constant orientation of the heart to God plumbs the depths of the inner life, and constantly keeps the highest and purest drives of the human soul at one's attention. Finally, patience arises from a high evaluation of pain as a means of purifying and testing, by which God draws the soul away from the temporal and leads it to the eternal, in order to find the way to the better self that can stand before God.

Still more clearly the other side of the primary commandment comes to light, because its effect and demand are more visible and because it is easier to conceptualize. But here, too, the meaning opens itself only to a more penetrating analysis. Here, too, everything falls under a religious point of view. It is not a love of neighbor in the humanitarian sense, at least not primarily that. The love of God, which has given us so much, is the motif of the love of the brother. In loving one's brother one does not simply love mankind directly, but loves that mankind which is of worth before God, a mankind who is called to holiness, like us, and who is the object of God's love. One loves him as a brother in the great family of the righteous and this is what distinguishes Christian love from any mere sympathy of friends, from family love and sexual love, from compassion and good will.

It is therefore a pure, selfless conviction of the heart that seeks the child of God in the brother, and that easily renounces all natural distinctions of honor, seniority, compensation, and legality. It is not merely a dismissal of the treacherous and the evil; rather it is the innermost cleanliness of the conviction of love and of the positive claim lying in the very heart of one's being. The separations that are so well justified in the worldly sphere do not exist for this kind of love because it moves towards a realm that is beyond the world. There is no longer racial class, or national distinctions. Christian love is not directed simply to esteemed and well-known men. It is directed rather to all insignificant, wretched, unnoticed, and needy men, because precisely these men are of eternal worth before God, and indeed they understand the truth of God better than the wise and great according to the flesh. Again, this love is not restricted to the circle of the faithful and the committed before God. It helps everyone at every opportunity because everyone is a potential and valuable brother, and because even the most distant man should experi-

ence the sustenance of the authentic home of mankind, even though he does not himself turn to God. For Jesus love is not simply a derivative of repentance, as it has so often become in overly zealous Christianity. Rather love always originates in God and in the idea of the divine purpose. It allows God himself to reign over the just and the unjust. This love may not be extinguished in face of enemies and despisers. It overcomes evil with good by a power that stems from the strength of God and from insight into the insignificance of all human struggles, which in itself is not possible to the natural man with his earthly horizons wherein all of his own cares are so important. It disarms hate by goodness, or by the forgiving conviction that most do not know what they are doing.

So the individual and the social purpose proceed with full clarity as the working out of the highest good of the divine community. Certainly the social purpose is superior, however only because the objective good that expresses the will of God for the earthly world requires the unity of all, just as God Himself is the unity of all. However, here too the priority of the social purpose is not absolute. The irrational separation of human consciousness into individual and community consciousness continues to remain in effect. It is not the intention of the gospel to resolve ethics into the care of one person for the other in place of each person's seeing to it that things are right with himself. Community stands above all else, but instances of conflict are not completely avoided, and their settlement is in every case a matter for the conscience, i.e., the discernment and deliberation of the consequences for the highest and final purpose of the religious life. As the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan teaches, the neighbor is anyone who needs our help. The reverse is also implied, namely that where there is no need for help and assistance, succor is not to be forced upon the neighbor. One is never required to give oneself merely for the sake of a higher self or for a community of higher selves, but one willingly gives oneself over to the stranger. In the case of missionaries and those devout persons who are professionally dedicated to the alleviation of suffering, the service is always a service for its own sake.

Now we have arrived at the objective character of Jesus' ethic. It is a specifically religious ethic, the highest and consequently the most complete type of religious ethic on the basis of prophetic personalism and theism. Jesus clearly and abundantly makes this point. The goal and the motive of human activity is the Kingdom of God. However, the Kingdom of God is certainly not the binding together of men by the common recognition that autonomy is a law established by God in the breast. This is a modern abstraction which is very far away from naïve ancient realism. The Kingdom of God is a wonderful gift of God, something completely objective, a community of men in complete freedom and

complete love. It will be realized in unrestricted submission and yielding to the complete, open Lordship of God and will stand under the special direction and protection of God. It is a kingdom in which one will look upon God and in which the kindly will receive loving-kindness. Whatever position one takes with regard to the synoptic transmission, and however much one may believe the preaching of Jesus to be colored by the apocalyptic and messianic views of the early Church, the Kingdom of God is the ideal situation that God is bringing about, in which the submission of all men to God will be completed, and in which the complete revelation of the divine power and grace will be accomplished. The religious character of objective values is illuminated by the fact that the achievement of this ideal condition is completely a work of the grace of God. The unusual concentration of Jesus' whole thought upon this purpose is revealed in the fact that this gracious act is at hand. Indeed, the gospel is simply the summons to prepare the divine consummation. When so understood, the proximity of the ideal and of the judgment clarifies for the first time the great intensity that the gospel ethic achieves. The true righteousness that is valid before God means the complete setting aside of all worldly considerations and purposes. All else becomes trivial and insignificant in an ethic that looks upon the end and the completed, that attends only to the highest and final good. In the misery of an oppressed and downtrodden people and of extinguished earthly hope and order, this ethic knows only the highest and the final hope which is set as the goal of life. The expectation of the prophets and apocalypticists of the messianic Kingdom of God becomes the announcement of the realization of the ideal. It becomes the picture of a completed religious inwardness and divine sonship that equally recognizes the other children of God. The ideal is now immediately at hand, even though only the Father knows the day and the hour.

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In his later career Troeltsch became increasingly aware of what Kierkegaard had made clear: that socially conditioned decisions have to be made without knowing the universal pattern of history.[6] Man has to act within the paradox of fragmentary knowledge and limited courage. He cannot wait for completeness, but is forced to seek proximate answers to immediate problems rather than universal answers valid for every time and place.

This, one may note in passing, is especially true in the modern world. With such novel conditions to deal with as the rise of the nation state,

[6] This is especially evident in *Der Historismus und Seine Probleme,* Band IV, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922).

industrial technology, and the population explosion, our age demands a renewal of responsibility. This must take place within newly conceived social structures, if the free expression of personality is to be preserved.

What Troeltsch does not take into account is the extent to which personality itself is shaped by its individual history. This center of "value" is distorted and wrenched by its own odyssey, a fact amply demonstrated by Freud. If Troeltsch shows that responsibility always has a socially limited horizon, Freud in turn shows that individual conscience is equally formed and hedged in by the experiences of life. Troeltsch did not move far enough in his criticism of Kant. He did not see that, in the end, every ethic *sub specie aeternitatis* must give way to an ethic *sub specie temporis.*

5. Sigmund Freud

1856-1939

Austrian Jewish founder of psychoanalysis. Born in Moravia but from age of four lived in Vienna. Studied medicine, specially interested in chemistry and botany. Worked in private physiology laboratory, then Institute of Anatomy. Learned of Breuer's experience with hysterical patient under hypnosis and in 1894 went to Paris to study with Charcot. Published studies in neurology and (with Breuer) on hysteria. In 1894 made epoch-making decision to replace hypnosis by free-association method of reviving buried memories of patients. Discovered real nature of both psychoneurosis and normal mind: as expressed in the unconscious, in conflicts due to repressions, and in infantile sexuality. At first worked alone at psychoanalysis. About 1906 was joined by Adler, Brill, Ferenczi, Jung, Jones, and others. For many years director of International Journal of Psychology, *and helped found International Congress and International Association of Psychoanalysis. Moved to London after Nazi takeover of Austria, died the following year.*

"The superego has the ego at its mercy . . . indeed it represents the whole demands of morality and we see all at once that our moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the superego."

If the concept of conscience was attacked existentially by Kierkegaard and historically by Troeltsch, it was assailed clinically by Sigmund Freud. His focus was upon the psychiatric description of personality rather than on paradoxes in the human sense of obligation. He was able to show clearly that conscience is extremely quixotic in its operation, and closely involved in many of the physical and emotional illnesses of men. Backed by detailed clinical evidence, he outlines the way in which accidental influences during childhood are the major source of conscientiousness later in life. His work validates Mill's idea that feelings of obligation derive from the socialization of other, more basic instincts.

Freud came rather late in his career to a rounded concept of the superego. This is the part of personality that registers and remembers the standards by which we think we ought to behave. The concept gathered to itself a variety of observations made in other connections. In his

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For Freud's treatment of religion consult Totem and Taboo *(1912–13),* The Future of an Illusion *(1927), and* Moses and Monotheism *(1939). His collected works are being newly translated under the inclusive title,* The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud *(London: Hogarth Press), under the editorship of James Strachey.*

earliest writings Freud had noted that there is in personality a "censor" whose function it is to watch the content of dreams and daily speech. Underlying motives may sneak past it in the disguise of dream symbolism or slips of the tongue.[1] Freud's studies of compulsive neurosis convinced him that the personality usually enforces stringent taboos upon itself, and that these are largely a product of early parental restrictions.[2] He observed in his study of melancholia that many people idealize the values of their parents' mode of discipline. They tend at times to blame themselves mercilessly in the light of this idealization.[3] Depressive despair results from extreme criticism by the unseen observer in the personality.

Drawing together these various functions of observer, censor, enforcer, critic, and ego ideal, Freud assumes an activity in the personality which he calls the *superego* (the "Over-I").[4]

The origin of the superego in its various forms lies in the restrictions and trauma, or wounds, of the child's early social environment. It therefore varies according to the personal history and unique instinctual inclinations of each individual. Freud always insists that the choices involved in holding values and developing purpose are closely connected with past restrictions and repressions. Conscience he sees as basically the voice of personal urges that have been turned against themselves by anxiety deriving from the social environment. From this point of view, personality is made up of a series of pressures and conflicts. The instinctual drives of the *id* are held back by the idealized values of the superego and by the hard necessities of external reality. Obligation is the expression of inclinations that have been inverted in the course of the individual's unique life experiences.

According to Freud's analysis, the conscience appears to be largely a neurotic illness.[5] He believes that the cohesiveness of society is built upon moral repression that has been inwardly accepted (internalized). But he is also convinced that release from too much repression will bring about

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[1] Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,* Vol. VI of "The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud," James Strachey *et al.*, ed. and trans. (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1960).

[2] *Totem and Taboo and Other Works,* Vol. XIII of the "Standard Edition" (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955).

[3] "Mourning and Melancholia," in Vol. XIV of the "Standard Edition": *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology, and Other Works* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1957).

[4] The idea of a superego was first set forth in the selection that follows.

[5] Some ego psychologists have recently distinguished between values that operate irrationally in the personality and those that are openly recognized by the individual to be his own. From this point of view, freedom is not so much the absence of obligation as an open acceptance of meaning and purpose. Cf. Heinz Hartmann, *Psychoanalysis and Moral Values* (New York: International Universities Press, 1960).

greater social freedom between persons. The peculiar character of conscience is that, contrary to the theories of Kant, it operates quite irrationally. It may throw a person into a depression one day and release most of his inhibitions the next. Freud rather disdainfully suggests that such an erratic performance can hardly be the voice of God. Heavy moral insistence on religious or other taboos are usually indicative of illness originating in an earlier personal trauma. Freud even sometimes hints in his later writing that the conscience is an impulse toward self-destruction, an expression of the "death wish." Here is another concept first formulated by this pioneer.[6] Like Nietzsche, he is sensitive to certain morbid elements in the function of the superego.[7]

In our selection from his lectures, Freud reminds his audience of the importance of one's starting point. Psychoanalysis began its development with the symptom. The symptom has its roots in what is repressed. Thus the symptom led to the unconscious, to the instincts, to sexualtiy—and to the distress of critics, who pointed out that man has other, nobler feelings!

One cannot do everything at once. The repressed elements were studied, Freud says, and then there was time to study the repressing forces, the ego-instincts. A line of approach was hard to find. We want to study the ego—but how? In a subject-object relationship it is naturally the subject. How can one make it into an object? One part of it will have to stand and observe the other; it will have to split. But the fact is that it often does this temporarily. We are used to it.

Pathological situations tell us a good deal about the basic structure of normality. Psychotics are fissured and splintered structures, like crystals thrown down, that break along lines of cleavage. Where pathology creates a break, under normal conditions there may be a reliable link, and this helps us to understand personality. One well-known type of patient suffers from "delusions of observation," with hallucinations of unknown powers or persons observing and commenting on them. It is not persecution, but something quite near it. But what if these patients were right —what if we all had an observing function in our ego, threatening us with punishment for wrongdoing? A "normal" function, in their case separated from the ego and projected into external reality by mistake——

Thus began the notion that the separating-off of an observing function might be a normal part of ego structure. Freud investigated more closely. In psychotics the content of the delusion appears as a first step toward conviction and punishment. One may therefore guess that another phase of this observing function may be that of "conscience," which we regu-

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[6] In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle . . . and Other Works,* Vol. XVIII of the "Standard Edition" (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955).

[7] See Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887).

larly separate from our ego and set off against it in contrast. I want to do something, but refrain because my conscience will not allow it. I allow myself to do something *against* my conscience, and afterward feel remorse. One may conveniently call this observing entity the superego.

Freud goes on to other clinical pictures: typical behavior in "melancholia," for instance. Here the superego is clearly tormenting the ego with threats, abuse, humiliation, and every severity and reproach. It "has the ego at its mercy and applies the most severe standards to it; indeed it represents the whole demands of morality and we see all at once that our moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the super-ego." In the opposite phase of the patient's cycle, however, all this disappears. The patient becomes ecstatic, uninhibited. The superego is lost in the triumphant *ego*.

Freud notes the uneven distribution of conscience among people in general (as against Kant's idea), many persons having little or none. It does exist within us, but—unlike sexuality—has not been there from the beginning. (We remember that for Mill this did not matter. The power of speech, also very fundamental, has to be learned.) Freud points to the amorality of children and the effect of parental discipline and withdrawal of love. In the objective anxieties of the child he sees the root of later moral anxiety, when the superego takes over the parents' function of holding up standards before us.

The takeover process is complex and not completely understood, but involves identification. This is different from object-choice. In one instance there is a desire to be *like* a person, in the other, to *have* or possess the person or his love. When the child outgrows its earliest and closest emotional tie to its parents, its *identification* with the parents, oddly enough, intensifies. Later the superego takes on traits from other sources and becomes more impersonal.

The writer describes the ego-ideal which the superego holds forth and toward which the ego strives, differentiating between the inferiority complex and the sense of guilt. There is a half-concealed illustration here from the life of the former German Kaiser with his withered arm. The striving toward perfection to which we are goaded by the superego Freud sees as the real dynamic in moral striving. The source of our morality, therefore, we must look for in the early influence of parents and teachers (who stand in the same relation as parents). Yet they do not really bring up children by their own standards, but by the force and clarity in turn of *their* superegos, formed in their own childhood. Thus the superego is "the vehicle of tradition and of all the age-long values" handed down from one generation to the next. This is probably more important in social development than people generally think, by comparison with other factors—economic conditions and so forth.

Freud considered his *New Introductory Lectures* (1932) a "continuation and supplement" of the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* delivered at the Vienna Psychiatrical Clinic in the years 1915–17. The new series could be called lectures only in the author's imagination, since Freud was then retired from the psychiatric faculty and was in fact unable to speak in public because of recent surgery. Intended for readers with a good general education but no special knowledge of psychiatry, the "lectures" are marked by a reasonably clear and direct style. They show the development of Freud's thought since the 1915–17 series. The selection given here is perhaps Freud's most succinct description of his more mature theory of personality.

LECTURE XXXI
THE DISSECTION OF THE PSYCHICAL PERSONALITY[1]

Ladies and Gentlemen.—I know you are aware in regard to your own relations, whether with people or things, of the importance of your starting point. This was also the case with psycho-analysis. It has not been a matter of indifference for the course of its development or for the reception it met with that it began its work on what is, of all the contents of the mind, most foreign to the ego—on symptoms. Symptoms are derived from the repressed, they are, as it were, its representatives before the ego; but the repressed is foreign territory to the ego—internal foreign territory —just as reality (if you will forgive the unusual expression) is external foreign territory. The path led from symptoms to the unconscious, to the life of the instincts, to sexuality; and it was then that psycho-analysis was met by the brilliant objection that human beings are not merely sexual creatures but have nobler and higher impulses as well. It might have been added that, exalted by their consciousness of these higher impulses, they often assume the right to think nonsense and to neglect facts.

You know better. From the very first we have said that human beings fall ill of a conflict between the claims of instinctual life and the resistance which arises within them against it; and not for a moment have we forgotten this resisting, repelling, repressing agency, which we thought of as equipped with its special forces, the ego-instincts, and which coincides

[1] [The greater part of the material in this lecture is derived (with some amplifications) from Chapters I, II, III and V of *The Ego and the Id* (1923b).]

with the ego of popular psychology. The truth was merely that, in view of the laborious nature of the progress made by scientific work, even psycho-analysis was not able to study every field simultaneously and to express its views on every problem in a single breath. But at last the point was reached when it was possible for us to divert our attention from the repressed to the repressing forces, and we faced this ego, which had seemed so self-evident, with the secure expectation that here once again we should find things for which we could not have been prepared. It was not easy, however, to find a first approach; and that is what I intend to talk to you about today.

I must, however, let you know of my suspicion that this account of mine of ego-psychology will affect you differently from the introduction into the psychical underworld which preceded it. I cannot say with certainty why this should be so. I thought first that you would discover that whereas what I reported to you previously were, in the main, facts, however strange and peculiar, now you will be listening principally to opinions—that is, to speculations. But that does not meet the position. After further consideration I must maintain that the amount of intellectual working-over of the factual material in our ego-psychology is not much greater than it was in the psychology of the neuroses. I have been obliged to reject other explanations as well of the result I anticipate: I now believe that it is somehow a question of the nature of the material itself and of our being unaccustomed to dealing with it. In any case, I shall not be surprised if you show yourselves even more reserved and cautious in your judgment than hitherto.

The situation in which we find ourselves at the beginning of our enquiry may be expected itself to point the way for us. We wish to make the ego the matter of our enquiry, our very own ego. But is that possible? After all, the ego is in its very essence a subject; how can it be made into an object? Well, there is no doubt that it can be. The ego can take itself as an object, can treat itself like other objects, can observe itself, criticize itself, and do Heaven knows what with itself. In this, one part of the ego is setting itself over against the rest. So the ego can be split; it splits itself during a number of its functions—temporarily at least. Its parts can come together again afterwards. That is not exactly a novelty, though it may perhaps be putting an unusual emphasis on what is generally known. On the other hand, we are familiar with the notion that pathology, by making things larger and coarser, can draw our attention to normal conditions which would otherwise have escaped us. Where it points to a breach or a rent, there may normally be an articulation present. If we throw a crystal to the floor, it breaks; but not into haphazard pieces. It comes apart along its lines of cleavage into fragments whose boundaries, though they were invisible, were predetermined by the crystal's structure. Mental patients are split and broken structures of this same kind. Even we cannot

withhold from them something of the reverential awe which peoples of the past felt for the insane. They have turned away from external reality, but for that very reason they know more about internal, psychical reality and can reveal a number of things to us that would otherwise be inaccessible to us.

We describe one group of these patients as suffering from delusions of being observed. They complain to us that perpetually, and down to their most intimate actions, they are being molested by the observation of unknown powers—presumably persons—and that in hallucinations they hear these persons reporting the outcome of their observation: 'now he's going to say this, now he's dressing to go out' and so on. Observation of this sort is not yet the same thing as persecution, but it is not far from it; it presupposes that people distrust them, and expect to catch them carrying out forbidden actions for which they would be punished. How would it be if these insane people were right, if in each of us there is present in his ego an agency like this which observes and threatens to punish, and which in them has merely become sharply divided from their ego and mistakenly displaced into external reality?

I cannot tell whether the same thing will happen to you as to me. Ever since, under the powerful impression of this clinical picture, I formed the idea that the separation of the observing agency from the rest of the ego might be a regular feature of the ego's structure, that idea has never left me, and I was driven to investigate the further characteristics and connections of the agency which was thus separated off. The next step is quickly taken. The content of the delusions of being observed already suggests that the observing is only a preparation for judging and punishing, and we accordingly guess that another function of this agency must be what we call our conscience. There is scarcely anything else in us that we so regularly separate from our ego and so easily set over against it as precisely our conscience. I feel an inclination to do something that I think will give me pleasure, but I abandon it on the ground that my conscience does not allow it. Or I have let myself be persuaded by too great an expectation of pleasure into doing something to which the voice of conscience has objected and after the deed my conscience punishes me with distressing reproaches and causes me to feel remorse for the deed. I might simply say that the special agency which I am beginning to distinguish in the ego is conscience. But it is more prudent to keep the agency as something independent and to suppose that conscience is one of its functions and that self-observation, which is an essential preliminary to the judging activity of conscience, is another of them. And since when we recognize that something has a separate existence we give it a name of its own, from this time forward I will describe this agency in the ego as the '*super-ego*.'

I am now prepared to hear you ask me scornfully whether our ego-

psychology comes down to nothing more than taking commonly used abstractions literally and in a crude sense, and transforming them from concepts into things—by which not much would be gained. To this I would reply that in ego-psychology it will be difficult to escape what is universally known; it will rather be a question of new ways of looking at things and new ways of arranging them than of new discoveries. So hold to your contemptuous criticism for the time being and await further explanations. The facts of pathology give our efforts a background that you would look for in vain in popular psychology. So I will proceed.

Hardly have we familiarized ourselves with the idea of a super-ego like this which enjoys a certain degree of autonomy, follows its own intentions and is independent of the ego for its supply of energy, than a clinical picture forces itself on our notice which throws a striking light on the severity of this agency and indeed its cruelty, and on its changing relations to the ego. I am thinking of the condition of melancholia,[2] or, more precisely, of melancholic attacks, which you too will have heard plenty about, even if you are not psychiatrists. The most striking feature of this illness, of whose causation and mechanism we know much too little, is the way in which the super-ego—'conscience,' you may call it, quietly—treats the ego. While a melancholic can, like other people, show a greater or lesser degree of severity to himself in his healthy periods, during a melancholic attack his super-ego becomes over-severe, abuses the poor ego, humiliates it and ill-treats it, threatens it with the direct punishments, reproaches it for actions in the remotest past which had been taken lightly at the time—as though it had spent the whole interval in collecting accusations and had only been waiting for its present access of strength in order to bring them up and make a condemnatory judgment on their basis. The super-ego applies the strictest moral standard to the helpless ego which is at its mercy; in general it represents the claims of morality, and we realize all at once that our moral sense of guilt is the expression of the tension between the ego and the super-ego. It is a most remarkable experience to see morality, which is supposd to have been given us by God and thus deeply implanted in us, functioning (in these patients) as a periodic phenomenon. For after a certain number of months the whole moral fuss is over, the criticism of the super-ego is silent, the ego is rehabilitated and again conveys all the rights of man till the next attack. In some forms of the disease, indeed, something of a contrary sort occurs in the intervals; the ego finds itself in a blissful state of intoxication, it celebrates a triumph, as though the super-ego had lost all its strength or had melted into the ego; and this liberated, manic ego permits itself a truly uninhibited satisfaction of all its appetites. Here are happenings rich in unsolved riddles!

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[2] [Modern terminology would probably speak of 'depression.']

No doubt you will expect me to give you more than a mere illustration when I inform you that we have found out all kinds of things about the formation of the super-ego—that is to say, about the origin of conscience. Following a well-known pronouncement of Kant's which couples the conscience within us with the starry Heavens, a pious man might well be tempted to honour these two things as the masterpieces of creation. The stars are indeed magnificent, but as regards conscience God has done an uneven and careless piece of work, for a large majority of men have brought along with them only a modest amount of it or scarcely enough to be worth mentioning. We are far from overlooking the portion of psychological truth that is contained in the assertion that conscience is of divine origin; but the thesis needs interpretation. Even if conscience is something 'within us,' yet it is not so from the first. In this it is a real contrast to sexual life, which is in fact there from the beginning of life and not only a later addition. But, as is well known, young children are amoral and possess no internal inhibitions against their impulses striving for pleasure. The part which is later taken on by the super-ego is played to begin with by an external power, by parental authority. Parental influence governs the child by offering proofs of love and by threatening punishments which are signs to the child of loss of love and are bound to be feared on their own account. This realistic anxiety is the precursor of the later moral anxiety.[3] So long as it is dominant there is no need to talk of a super-ego and of a conscience. It is only subsequently that the secondary situation develops (which we are all too ready to regard as the normal one), where the external restraint is internalized and the super-ego takes the place of the parental agency and observes, directs and threatens the ego in exactly the same way as earlier the parents did with the child.

The super-ego, which thus takes over the power, function and even the methods of the parental agency, is however not merely its successor but actually the legitimate heir of its body. It proceeds directly out of it, we shall learn presently by what process. First, however, we must dwell upon a discrepancy between the two. The super-ego seems to have made a one-sided choice and to have picked out only the parents' strictness and severity, their prohibiting and punitive function, whereas their loving care seems not to have been taken over and maintained. If the parents have really enforced their authority with severity we can easily understand the child's in turn developing a severe super-ego. But, contrary to our expectation, experience shows that the super-ego can acquire the same characteristic of relentless severity even if the upbringing had been mild and

[3] [*'Gewissensangst,'* literally 'conscience anxiety.' Some discussion of the word will be found in an Editor's footnote to *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, Standard Ed., 20,* 128.]

kindly and had so far as possible avoided threats and punishments. We shall come back later to this contradiction when we deal with the transformations of instinct during the formation of the super-ego.[4]

I cannot tell you as much as I should like about the metamorphosis of the parental relationship into the super-ego, partly because that process is so complicated that an account of it will not fit into the framework of an introductory course of lectures such as I am trying to give you, but partly also because we ourselves do not feel sure that we understand it completely. So you must be content with the sketch that follows.

The basis of the process is what is called an 'identification'—that is to say, the assimilation of one ego to another one,[5] as a result of which the first ego behaves like the second in certain respects, imitates it and in a sense takes it up into itself. Identification has been not unsuitably compared with the oral, cannibalistic incorporation of the other person. It is a very important form of attachment to someone else, probably the very first, and not the same thing as the choice of an object. The difference between the two can be expressed in some such way as this. If a boy identifies himself with his father, he wants to *be like* his father; if he makes him the object of his choice, he wants to *have* him, to possess him. In the first case his ego is altered on the model of his father; in the second case that is not necessary. Identification and object-choice are to a large extent independent of each other; it is however possible to identify oneself with someone whom, for instance, one has taken as a sexual object, and to alter one's ego on his model. It is said that the influencing of the ego by the sexual object occurs particularly often with women and is characteristic of femininity. I must already have spoken to you in my earlier lectures of what is by far the most instructive relation between identification and object-choice. It can be observed equally easily in children and adults, in normal as in sick people. If one has lost an object or has been obliged to give it up, one often compensates oneself by identifrying oneself with it and by setting it up once more in one's ego, so that here object-choice regresses, as it were, to identification.[6]

I myself am far from satisfied with these remarks on identification; but it will be enough if you can grant me that the installation of the super-ego can be described as a successful instance of identification with the parental agency. The fact that speaks decisively for this view is that this new

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[4] [See Lecture XXXII.]

[5] [I.e. one ego coming to resemble another one.]

[6] [The matter is in fact only very briefly alluded to in the *Introductory Lectures* (see the later part of Lecture XXVI, *Standard Ed., 16,* 427–8). Identification was the subject of Chapter VII of *Group Psychology* (1921c), *ibid., 18,* 150 ff. The formation of the super-ego was discussed at length in Chapter III of *The Ego and the Id* (1923b), *ibid., 19,* 28 ff.]

creation of a superior agency within the ego is most intimately linked with the destiny of the Oedipus complex, so that the super-ego appears as the heir of that emotional attachment which is of such importance for childhood. With his abandonment of the Oedipus complex a child must, as we can see, renounce the intense object-cathexes which he has deposited with his parents, and it is as a compensation for this loss of objects that there is such a strong intensification of the identifications with his parents which have probably long been present in his ego. Identifications of this kind as precipitates of object-cathexes that have been given up will be repeated often enough later in the child's life; but it is entirely in accordance with the emotional importance of this first instance of such a transformation that a special place in the ego should be found for its outcome. Close investigation has shown us, too, that the super-ego is stunted in its strength and growth if the surmounting of the Oedipus complex is only incompletely successful. In the course of development the super-ego also takes on the influences of those who have stepped into the place of parents—educators, teachers, people chosen as ideal models. Normally it departs more and more from the original parental figures; it becomes, so to say, more impersonal. Nor must it be forgotten that a child has a different estimate of its parents at different periods of its life. At the time at which the Oedipus complex gives place to the super-ego they are something quite magnificent; but later they lose much of this. Identifications then come about with these later parents as well, and indeed they regularly make important contributions to the formation of character; but in that case they only affect the ego, they no longer influence the super-ego, which has been determined by the earliest parental images.[7]

I hope you have already formed an impression that the hypothesis of the super-ego really describes a structural relation and is not merely a personification of some such abstraction as that of conscience. One more important function remains to be mentioned which we attribute to the super-ego. It is also the vehicle of the ego ideal by which the ego measures itself, which it emulates, and whose demand for ever greater perfection it strives to fulfill. There is no doubt that this ego ideal is the precipitate of the old picture of the parents, the expression of admiration for the perfection which the child then attributed to them.[8]

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[7] [This point was discussed by Freud in a paper on 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924c), *Standard Ed., 19,* 168, where, incidentally, an editorial footnote deals with Freud's use of the term 'imago.']

[8] [There is some obscurity in this passage, and in particular over the phrase '*der Trager des Ichideals,*' here translated 'the vehicle of the ego ideal.' When Freud first introduced the concept in his paper on narcissism (1914c), he distinguished between the ego ideal itself and 'a special psychical agency which performs the task of seeing that narcissistic satisfaction from the ego ideal is ensured and which,

I am sure you have heard a great deal of the sense of inferiority which is supposed particularly to characterize neurotics. It especially haunts the pages of what are known as *belles lettres*. An author who uses the term 'inferiority complex' thinks that by so doing he has fulfilled all the demands of psycho-analysis and has raised his composition to a higher psychological plane. In fact 'inferiority complex' is a technical term that is scarcely used in psycho-analysis. For us it does not bear the meaning of anything simple, let alone elementary. To trace it back to the self-perception of possible organic defects, as the school of what are known as 'Individual Psychologists'[9] likes to do, seems to us a short-sighted error. The sense of inferiority has strong erotic roots. A child feels inferior if he notices that he is not loved, and so does an adult. The only bodily organ which is really regarded as inferior is the atrophied penis, a girl's clitoris.[10] But the major part of the sense of inferiority derives from the ego's relation to its super-ego; like the sense of guilt it is an expression of the tension between them. Altogether, it is hard to separate the sense of inferiority and the sense of guilt. It would perhaps be right to regard the former as the erotic complement to the moral sense of inferiority. Little attention has been given in psycho-analysis to the question of the delimitation of the two concepts.

If only because the inferiority complex has become so popular, I will venture to entertain you here with a short digression. A historical personality of our own days, who is still alive though at the moment he has retired into the background, suffers from a defect in one of his limbs owing to an injury at the time of his birth. A very well-known contemporary writer who is particularly fond of compiling the biographies of celebrities has dealt, among others, with the life of the man I am speaking of.[11] Now in writing a biography it may well be difficult to suppress a need to plumb the psychological depths. For this reason our author has ventured

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with this end in view, constantly watches the actual ego and measures it by that ideal' (*Standard Ed. 14,* 95). Similarly in Lecture XXVI of the *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17), *Standard Ed., 16.,* 429, he speaks of a person sensing 'an agency holding sway in his ego which measures his actual ego and each of its activities by an ideal ego that he has created for himself in the course of his development.' In some of Freud's later writings this distinction between the ideal and the agency enforcing it became blurred. It seems possible that it is revived here and that the super-ego is being identified with the enforcing agency. The use of the term *'Idealfunktion'* three paragraphs lower down (p. 257) raises the same question. The whole subject was discussed in the Editor's Introduction to *The Ego and the Id* (1923b) (*ibid., 19,* 9–10).]

[9] [These views are discussed in Lecture XXXIV.]

[10] [Cf. a footnote of Freud's to his paper on the anatomical distinction between the sexes (1925j), *Standard Ed., 19,* 253–4.]

[11] [*Wilhelm II,* by Emil Ludwig (1926).]

on an attempt to erect the whole of the development of his hero's character on the sense of inferiority which must have been called up by his physical defect. In doing so, he has overlooked one small but not insignificant fact. It is usual for mothers whom Fate has presented with a child who is sickly or otherwise at a disadvantage to try to compensate him for his unfair handicap by a superabundance of love. In the instance before us, the proud mother behaved otherwise; she withdrew her love from the child on account of his infirmity. When he had grown up into a man of great power, he proved unambiguously by his actions that he had never forgiven his mother. When you consider the importance of a mother's love for the mental life of a child, you will no doubt make a tacit correction of the biographer's inferiority theory.

But let us return to the super-ego. We have allotted it the functions of self-observation, of conscience and of [maintaining] the ideal.[12] It follows from what we have said about its origin that it presupposes an immensely important biological fact and a fateful psychological one: namely, the human child's long dependence on its parents and the Oedipus complex, both of which, again, are intimately interconnected. The super-ego is the representative for us of every moral restriction, the advocate of a striving towards perfection—it is, in short, as much as we have been able to grasp psychologically of what is described as the higher side of human life. Since it itself goes back to the influence of parents, educators and so on, we learn still more of its significance if we turn to those who are its sources. As a rule parents and authorities analogous to them follow the precepts of their own super-egos in educating children. Whatever understanding their ego may have come to with their super-ego, they are severe and exacting in educating children. They have forgotten the difficulties of their own childhood and they are glad to be able now to identify themselves fully with their own parents who in the past laid such severe restrictions upon them. Thus a child's super-ego is in fact constructed on the model not of its parents but of its parents' super-ego; the contents which fill it are the same and it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the time-resisting judgments of value which have propagated themselves in this manner from generation to generation. You may easily guess what important assistance taking the super-ego into account will give us in our understanding of the social behavior of mankind—in the problem of delinquency, for instance—and perhaps even what practical hints on education. It seems likely that what are known as materialistic views of history sin in under-estimating this factor. They brush it aside with the remark that human 'ideologies' are nothing other than the product and superstructure of their contemporary economic conditions. That is true,

[12] ['*Idealfunktion.*' Cf. footnote 8, p. 255.]

but very probably not the whole truth. Mankind never lives entirely in the present. The past, the tradition of the race and of the people, lives on in the ideologies of the super-ego, and yields only slowly to the influences of the present and to new changes; and so long as it operates through the super-ego it plays a powerful part in human life, independently of economic conditions.

In 1921 I endeavoured to make use of the differentiation between the ego and the super-ego in a study of group psychology. I arrived at a formula such as this: a psychological group is a collection of individuals who have introduced the same person into their super-ego and, on the basis of this common element, have identified themselves with one another in their ego.[13] This applies, of course, only to groups that have a leader. If we possessed more applications of this kind, the hypothesis of the super-ego would lose its last touch of strangeness for us, and we should become completely free of the embarrassment that still comes over us when, accustomed as we are to the atmosphere of the underworld, we move in the more superficial, higher strata of the mental apparatus. We do not suppose, of course, that with the separation off of the super-ego we have said the last word on the psychology of the ego. It is rather a first step; but in this case it is not only the first step that is hard.

Freud's impact upon the modern world is in some ways parallel to that of Kiekegaard and supplementary to Troeltsch. The latter had given an historical perspective to conscience in its social context. But he had left another aspect of conscience as if detached and timeless within each personality. This other, individual element is found by Freud to be just as temporal and dependent on its context as the social side. Kierkegaard felt intuitively that freedom and the internal sense of obligation do not always march hand in hand. Freud demonstrated clinically that the most determined sense of obligation may sometimes stand in opposition to real freedom and health. His objective psychiatric description parallels Kierkegaard's subjective description.

The medieval acceptance of total conceptions of history, freedom, and truth is not easily possible in the twentieth century. The visions of Kant and to some extent of Mill are being profoundly shaken. Value comes to us dependent on historical contingencies, whether on the social or the personal level. The very idea of universal obligation encounters the paradox of the existing individual and the sick conscience. Can the individual live in hope at all, or must he be thrown into utter despair? Is freedom based on illusion? Is all value indeed relative? To these questions men such as Heidegger, Bonhoeffer, Tillich, and Barth have turned their attention.

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[13] [*Group Psychology* (1921c), *Standard Ed.*, *18*, 116.]

6. Paul Tillich

1886-1966

American (formerly German) philosopher and Protestant theologian. Born in Starzeddel, near Guben, in Brandenburg province. Studied at University of Halle. German Army chaplain 1914–18, after which he taught at Berlin University, Marburg, and Dresden. In 1929–33 was professor of theology and philosophy at Frankfurt. Widely known teacher, lecturer, writer, and advocate of "religious socialism," a German renewal movement. Dismissed by Hitler in 1933, brought to New York through efforts of Union Thelogical Seminary and Columbia University professors, taught and worked in the Seminary. After difficult language adjustment, from 1941 to 1955 was professor of theology and philosophy there. Following retirement, served as professor at Harvard and Chicago University divinity schools. Held still newer appointment at time of death. Prolific writer and preacher in English. Received many awards, decorations, and honorary degrees in United States, Scotland, and Germany. Often credited with giving powerful expression in the twentieth century to the philosophical Idealism of Schelling and Hegel. Also influenced by Kierkegaard in belief that the state has no rights over religion, and every person must face existence alone, within himself.

"Love alone can transform itself according to the concrete demands of every individual and social situation without losing its eternity and dignity and unconditional validity."

Paul Tillich tries to preserve the truth of the Kantian idea of freedom and obligation. This he does within the context of the existential and historical elements—both social and personal—introduced by Kierkegaard, Troeltsch, and Freud. He describes the sense of obligation within each man as the intrinsic law of his own being. Obligation is not external to man. Rather it is man in his essential being, in all his potentialities. The various feelings of awe, duty, and respect that develop during childhood give content to the underlying quality of a person's being.

At the same time, man finds himself separated, estranged, and split away from himself. His very inclinations run counter to his own "true" or "best" character. This conflict he experiences as guilt, shame, and despair. His existence is a "sickness unto death." Emphasis on a "law" of obligation only intensifies the guilt, even though—and perhaps because the obligation rightly represents his intrinsic character. In a modern ver-

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The most complete formulation of Tillich's thought will be found in Systematic Theology, *three volumes (1951–63). Other representative works:* The Protestant Era *(1948) and* The Courage To Be *(1952).*

sion of St. Paul's statement of the paradox of human behavior—"What I would not, that I do . . ."—Tillich comments that the law is "descriptively accurate, but motivationally weak." The Pauline assertion that the law is both a good gift from God and a curse upon man is a shrewd reference to man's experience of the relation between freedom and obligation.[1]

According to Tillich the gap between inclination and the moral imperative is not overcome either in the Kantian respect for law or in Mill's sentiment for humanity. It is bridged, rather, by the presence of divine grace, the acceptance by God of the unacceptable. Whenever a man is grasped by the reality of being forgiven (even though he feels himself unforgivable), of being loved (though unlovable), then the inner law of his being is released to express itself in power. Human experience itself does not lead to this acceptance. At best it points at times to the power of divine grace. The reconciliation of obligation and inclination depends, in the end, upon a breakthrough of faith. This means being overcome by, and actively accepting, the paradoxical fact that one *is* accepted even though unacceptable.

Tillich points out that the divine acceptance can heal a conscience distorted by the destructive powers described by Freud. The therapist who listens sensitively to the patient's unsocial outpourings is expressing in human form the biblical truth that man is healed in being received by God. Acceptance at the human level is an active going forth toward a person and must never be confused with uncaring disregard. In the biblical description of divine grace, Christ actively and willingly takes to himself the total force of human rejection, even unto death. Far from being a mere addendum to what we know of anthropology, Christology from the beginning offers a true description of man as he exists. This is to say that a genuine anthropology, at its highest level—true for mankind as a whole—can be found only in Christ.

Tillich accepts Anders Nygren's description of *agape*,[2] Christian love, as different from erotic passion and other types of love distinguished in Greek vocabulary. The agape in man's being—in his deep intrinsic awareness of obligation—reconciles the individual and the social order. A man gives himself to his neighbor by giving himself to the social and institutional context of life. Agape has a twofold character. It willingly gives itself for the sake of the neighbor, and it has the power to come into expression in the circumstances of any situation whatever. It is always the same in its self-giving, yet different in the changing moments of its effectiveness. It meets the constantly changing tenor of life with a healing unity that comes from the depths of reality.

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[1] Galatians 3.

[2] See below, pp. 272–273.

This theologian manages to stand on the frontier between the traditional, "essentialist" understanding of man and his world and the existentialist and psychoanalytic views of man's alienation. He does so by his concept of divine grace in the midst of human despair. Grace is active in agape, which constantly tries to individualize itself in self-giving, rather than universalizing itself in duty. The movement of grace and love always takes place in the power of the "moment," which Tillich designates by the biblical term *Kairos*. As Quakers would say, it "speaks to the condition" of the persons and situation at hand. It is not a ruthlessly applied generality, bruising the human heart and concrete relationships by the inflexibility of unchanging rule. The power by which inclination and obligation are here reconciled is the movement of divine grace, and the content of that movement is an individual, humble love.

In the following selection Tillich turns to the question of whether there is a religious element in moral incentive. If the moral imperative is absolute, then any motivation other than that of law itself would seem to violate it—would not seem to be broad and far-reaching enough.

But only because man is alienated from himself does he experience such a thing as moral law. It is the "law" of his nature to be a centered being. If love "determined our being," if man were in harmony with his own structural make-up, there would be no question of law in the sense of moral command. But because he breaks it—contradicts it in his living—it becomes a law to him. Life dictates that he shall try to return to his true nature. The elements in this situation are well illustrated in the temptation of Adam, where we see the interplay of innocence, desire, separation from God, and the coming of law. For this happens even before there is any guilt, as soon as there is temptation. In *desire* the separation from God, from the true structure of man's being, is already there. Desire is the boundary between innocence and guilt, and if Jesus' temptations were genuine, he also stood on such a knife-edge.

Thus the "law" that is a word for the real inner structure of our being can become a command to act according to that structure, if we have forsaken it, or there is a danger that we will forsake it. Has the command, then, any motivating power for fulfillment? At first it seems not. It is based on the very split we are told to rectify. Psychologically, moreover, a command to do good does not make us good. The true answer must be developed along several levels. With an alcoholic patient, for instance, the analyst will not get far by moralizing, which only drives the alcoholic back into his painful but stubborn freedom to destroy himself. One of the deepest insights of psychoanalysis is that law cannot break compulsions. "Thou shalt" does not liberate. Yet with acceptance there may be a different result. Only after compulsion is broken may the problem of morality be considered.

In education, again, a motivating power must be combined with "law." If authority is not united with intelligent reason, children and young people rebel. In the realm of religion we find the same problem: law, by showing us what we essentially *are*, shows us what we are not. For the most part neither Paul nor the Reformers saw the law as having motivating power.

All external systems of law are systems of compromise operating through social institutions (echo of Troeltsch) to produce "civil justice." But they are "far removed from the true nature of the moral." Their motivating power is tradition, public opinion, personal habit, and various threats and promises. Most people do not face the mixed character of good and evil in themselves; it requires quite exceptional courage. But the really serious ones have known that " 'naked' moral law has no motivating power." That can only be found in the grace of God.

Here Tillich digresses to discuss Socrates' analysis of what kind of knowledge can create moral action, and the tradition of the *logos* in Heraclitus, Parmenides, and the Gospel of John. Here we find the kind of truth that one can *do* and that Jesus *is*. Here insight itself is partly a moral act. A parallel occurs in psychotherapy, where sheer technical knowledge is useless even to the person who needs it, and he must live through the awareness of his repressions emotionally and directly (the "walk through hell") for the moral will to be liberated.

Still another Greek concept of motivation is that of *eros* as used by Plato in the *Symposium*. This involves the "mystical quality of love." It is a divine-human power, the "drive toward reunion with essential being . . . ultimately with the good as the principle of being and knowing." For mystics God and the good are identical. This is therefore love toward God. A person with a drive toward something may be described as *grasped* by what he is driving *toward*. When we come to Aristotle, Plato's idea becomes the power of the divine "that attracts every finite thing . . . and produces the movement of the stars, the universe, and the human mind." "The aim of everything finite is to participate in the life of the divine."

Once more, the writer notes, there is a parallel in the field of psychotherapy: in the behavior of the libido with it various conditions and limits.

Our excerpt ends with an exploration of the element of grace. Theology distinguishes between "common" grace in life generally and the special grace of those who are in Christ. Both together overcome the cleavage in our being. There is no longer the endless struggle to obey. Grace solves the problem of motivation, and the rule of law is broken. "He who has the grace of loving a thing, a task, a person, or an idea does not need to be asked to love. . . . Wherever elements of grace appear, the moral command is fulfilled. What was demanded, now is given."

Tillich discusses grace at some length, and the danger of trifling with it and forgetting morality. He dwells on the Christian polarity between forgiveness and fulfillment, neither possible without the other. However one may interpret them, in ancient terms or modern: "only he who is grasped by the Spirit can accept the tremendous paradox that he is accepted." Skeptics are apt to question the power of moral motivation in those who feel accepted "although unacceptable." This is, however, a gross misunderstanding of what happens, which Tillich lucidly corrects.

"The question of moral motivation," he concludes, "can be answered only transmorally. For the law demands, but cannot forgive; it judges, but cannot accept. Therefore, forgiveness and acceptance, the conditions of the fulfillment of the law, must come from something above the law, or more precisely, from something in which the split between our essential being and our existence is overcome and healing power has appeared."

The following selection is one of three lectures originally given as the Jacob Ziskind Memorial Lectures at Dartmouth College. Tillich was much concerned about the state of teaching and preaching in the Christian Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, but particularly of course the latter. "The Gospel," he said, ". . . has been transformed into a multiplicity of laws, partly doctrinal and partly ethical. The moral 'yoke' that Jesus wished to make easy has only been made heavier, and the message of grace has largely been lost. . . ." He used to speak of the "graceless moralism" of the Church and how it turns people to secular ethics.[3] Our selection is the third of these lectures.

III
THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN MORAL MOTIVATION

After having discovered its religious dimension in the unconditional character of the moral imperative, and the religious source of the moral demands under the dominance of *agape,* we now must ask whether there is a religious element in the process of moral motivation.

The question leads immediately to the concept of law. The unconditional moral imperative confronts us as the sacred moral law. It appears as the only justifiable motivation. Any other motivation would seem to introduce conditions that violate the unconditional character of morality. This is the basic point of view of Kant's rigoristic (not Puritan or Pietist)

[3] From the editor's Introduction to *Morality and Beyond,* cited below, pp. 13–14.

ethical theory. It would reduce the religious element in morality to the unconditional character of the moral imperative. We have already trespassed against this restriction with respect to the source of the ethical demands by establishing love as this source, without surrendering the formal strictness of the Kantian principles. We must now do likewise with respect to moral motivation.

As the linguistic form itself indicates, the moral imperative has the form of a commandment and, if generalized, a law. We have discussed the term "law" in connection with the natural laws of morals, and distinguished it from the physical laws of nature. This difference extensively influences the problem of moral motivation: the moral law is experienced as law only because man is estranged from the structural law of his essential being, namely, to become a centered person. This law belongs to him. It is his nature. And it would never become a commanding law if he did not try to break through it. But if he is estranged from it, if he contradicts it in his existence, it becomes law for him. And since all human beings share this predicament, they all stand under the law. And even love becomes law for them—"Thou shalt love . . ." If love determined our being, if it were a structural law with which we were one, it could not become a law that commands or an expression of the moral imperative. It would be an expression of our being, one with it, and not standing in opposition to it.

We can use this understanding of the law as a key to two biblical stories of great symbolic power—one, the temptation of Adam, and the other, the temptation of the Christ. In the story of the Fall, God forbids Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge (which is also power). We ask: why is this prohibition necessary? If Adam had been one with his true being, the negative command would not have been necessary. But as a man, he had the freedom to contradict his true being. In his condition of temptation he had not yet done so, but the tendency was in him, which means that he was already separated from the natural unity with God. The law appeared when the first symptoms of separation appeared, and the innocence of the created state of being in God was shaken. The law was a warning, a summoning back to original innocence. But by this very fact the innocence was no longer innocence. Neither was it guilt. It was on the boundary line of both, and the name of this boundary line is "desire."

This analysis of innocence, desire, and law can also be applied to one of the most problematic stories of the Gospels, the story of the temptations of Jesus. Some theologians deny the seriousness of the temptations; others affirm it, but are not aware of the consequences of their affirmation. In declaring with the New Testament and most classical theology the seriousness of the temptations of Jesus, we must acknowledge that

they are expressions of his true humanity. They should have protected his image against the seemingly irrepressible Monophysitic trends in all Christian churches—that is, against the theological error strongly supported by popular piety, which is to see in Jesus *a* god, walking on earth. But if the temptations of Jesus are taken seriously, the question arises whether their seriousness presupposes a separation from that unity with God that determines his whole life and makes him the selected "Son." The question can be answered by reference to the Adam story. Serious temptation presupposes desire for that by which one is tempted. Jesus, like Adam, stood between innocence and guilt, on the boundary line of existence where the commanding law appears. And Jesus quotes commanding words from the Old Testament against Satan.

With this insight into the two different meanings of law, law as structure and law as the demand to actualize this structure, we approach the question: has the law in the second sense a motivating power for the fulfillment of the moral imperative and its concrete demands? The answer, like the answer to the question of the ultimate principle of the content of morality, must be developed along several levels. For it is complex, representing the profoundest tensions in religious experience and in the history of Christianity.

The general question is: can the commanding law, which presupposes the contrast between our essential and our actual being, motivate us to transform ourselves in the direction of reuniting the actual with the essential? The first logically consistent answer: it *cannot!* For the very existence of the commanding law is based on that split. The law (in the following sections used only in the sense of the commanding law) is an expression of man's estrangement from his true nature. How would it then be able to overcome this estrangement? This logically unavoidable answer is also the psychologically experienced answer: The command to be good does not make us good. It may indeed drive us toward evil!

Let us consider this answer in several realms of experience. Most contemporary is the psychotherapeutic discovery that the least effective way of treating a person under a destructive compulsion—alcoholism, for example—is to direct him in terms of a moral command, "Don't drink any more!" No psychoanalyst worthy of his profession would commit this destructive error. The law, as stated by the analyst, would produce a tremendous resistance in the patient, and justly so. The patient would withdraw to his freedom to contradict himself, even though he might then destroy himself. The patient, in this action, defends a decisive element in human freedom. Psychoanalysts who (according to the latest fashion) begin to moralize to their patients, however cautiously, should remember that it is precisely the pathological loss of power to respond to moral commands that makes these persons patients. Most analysts are still

conscious of this, preserving one of the deepest insights of psychotherapy, namely, that the law cannot break compulsions, that the "thou shalt" does not liberate. Instead of encountering the law, the patient encounters acceptance on the part of the effective analyst. He is accepted in the state in which he is, and he is not told to change his state before becoming acceptable. In some cases, especially in pre-analytic counseling, the acceptance can express itself in a description by the counselor of how he himself was or still remains in a similar predicament, so that he ceases to be merely the subject, and the patient merely the object, in the healer-patient relationship.

Psychotherapy is accused of permissiveness. In particular cases this criticism is just—formerly, even more so. But so far as the method is concerned, this permissiveness is a result of a simple confusion between acceptance and permission. In the analytic situation there is neither command nor permission, but acceptance and healing. If the power of the compulsion is broken, a counseling exchange between the healer and the healed may take place, and the question may arise as to what the patient should do with his newly regained freedom. Only then should the problems of morality, its content, and its motivation come into focus, and the analyst may become a friend or a priest to the patient. But then the further question for both of them must be raised whether the moral law, appealing to their freedom, has motivating power, or whether it is powerless without a religious element in it—the religious element being an acceptance that transcends the psychotherapeutic distinction between the healer and healed.

Another relationship in which the question of the motivating power of the law is decisive is the educational one, first within the family, and then in the school and any other situation where an educational element is implied. There are many problems connected with the motivating power of the law in the educational realm. First, it is necessary to distinguish between demands based on authority and demands based on rationality. The distinction is rarely absolute because there is always authority behind educational demands; and this authority always claims to be rational. Nevertheless, it makes a great difference to the child, if he can understand a parental order as adequate to the situation, or if he feels it as a mere exercise of incomprehensible authority. In either case the child may resist. But in the first, the resistance is not rebellious; it is a primitive form of self-affirmation, weakened by a subconscious acknowledgment that the order was justified. Then the essential nature of the child is partly united with the content of the command, and to the degree to which it is united, the order proves not to be a strange law imposed by adult authority, but an expression of the demand of a practical situation, such as the necessary

regulation of hours at home and in school. Therefore, it is of great importance to the educational process to help the child to understand the objective validity of the orders he receives.

If this is not accomplished, or if the orders themselves are more the expressions of willful authority than of the situation, the child is driven toward a genuine rebellion, and three things can happen: the rebellion may succeed and a creative independence develop; or the rebellion may succeed externally but fail internally, and rebelliousness as a character trait may result; or the rebellion may fail externally and internally, leaving a broken, submissive character. These examples show the problem of the law in a realm where it is almost daily experienced, and where parents, teachers, and even philosophers of education, have concluded that the law should be removed altogether and replaced by a kind of organized permissiveness. This, however, has led to consequences in which the "dialectics of the law" are patently manifest. After a certain time (usually in later adolescence), the majority of children become well-adapted conformists, albeit on a superficial level. Those among them who feel this superficiality as emptiness complain that they never had to face the law seriously and remained without guidance to their own essential nature and its potentialities. In view of this situation one must agree with the apostle who was most critical of the commanding law—Paul—that "the law is good," for it expresses the created goodness of man, which man must face because he is estranged from it.

The reference to Paul leads to the realm in which the problem of moral motivation and, consequently, of the motivating power of the law, has been experienced and discussed most thoroughly and most profoundly in religion and theology. It is not the general question of the religious element in the moral motivation that concerns us at this moment, but the attitude toward the law in some of the greatest religious men. Their experience is not restricted to religion in the narrower sense of the word, but is typical of human experience generally. There is no text in theology, philosophy, and psychology that deals more profoundly with the problem of the law than the seventh chapter of Paul's Letter to the Romans. He praises the law as "holy in itself" and the commandment as "holy and just and good." He calls it "spiritual." In his "inmost self" he "delights in the law of God," he is "subject to God's law as a rational being." Without the law he would "never have become acquainted with sin." This is one facet of Paul's evaluation of the law: the law is the expression of what man essentially is and therefore ought to be, but what he actually is *not,* as the law shows to him.

The other side of Paul's evaluation of the law is based on his experience that the law commands us to do the good that we cannot do because

we are estranged from it and under a power that contradicts our true being: "Clearly, it is no longer I who am the agent, but sin that has its lodging in me." But the law does more than show us our essential nature and our estrangement from it. The law awakens the sleeping sin: "In the absence of law, sin is a dead thing"; "When the commandment came sin sprang to life"; "Through the commandment, sin became more sinful than ever." It is obvious that Paul does not consider the law as a power of moral motivation. He was, on the basis of his own experience, aware of the fact that the commanding law produces "all kinds of wrong desires," but does not motivate the conquest of these desires and the reunion of his actual will with his essential will: "What I do is the wrong which is against my will."

Paul's experience is independent of the religious framework in which it appears. A humanist with insight into his spiritual predicament could fully agree with it. Actually, however, and not by chance, the problem of the law as motivating power appeared again in its profundity and explosive power in the Protestant Reformation. All Reformers fought the idea that man's "good works," his fulfillment of the law, could be a contributing factor in salvation, or the acceptance of man by God. Not the fulfillment of commandments (which is impossible in the state of separation from God), but the acceptance of the message that we are accepted, is the motive of moral action. Nevertheless, the Reformers maintained a threefold use of the law—first, in its legal function as the principle of the positive law, the law of the nations; second, in its power to awaken our conscience to the fact that our actual existence contradicts our essential being, that we are estranged from ourselves; and third, in its function as a mirror of what is good and bad in Christian life. Luther denied and Calvin affirmed the third function of the law. But all the Reformers denied its power of moral motivation.

Again it was a personal experience, namely, that of Luther, that led to the rediscovery of Paul's experience and its theological implications. The depth to which Luther felt the ambiguity of the law emerges in expressions of hate, not only against the law itself, but also against the image of God who lays down a law nobody can fulfill and who punishes those who trespass against it. The shaking anxiety produced by this thought, and the hidden hatred against God, break out in Luther repeatedly, even in his later period. In such a state of mind, man is not able to recognize the law as the expression of his own essential being; he feels it as a strange and tyrannical command. But as with Paul, this is not Luther's sole evaluation of the law. The interpretation of the Ten Commandments in Luther's *Small Catechism* demonstrates that he is able to see in the law the right expression of man's relation to God and man in such a way that the right relation to God—love and fear—

provides the moral motivation. Beyond this, his interpretation indicates, as for every table of laws, a particular situation—in this case the paternalistic kind of rural society in which he lived. (Cf. Chapter II.*)

The ambiguity of the commanding law, as experienced by Luther, was the decisive problem for the entire period of the Reformation. The emphasis was different in different Reformers, but the basic answer was the same. The enormous tension produced by this ambiguity, however, slowly receded, and Protestantism became to a large extent a religion of the law, doctrinal as well as moral.

All systems, determined by the law, whether religious or secular, are systems of compromise. This is true of groups as well as of individuals; and it is true of the great majority of human beings and human situations in all periods. This happens because the moral law becomes embodied in state law, conventional rules, and educational principles (with or without the support of a particular religion), and exercises motivating power through tradition, public opinion, personal habit, and the threats and promises connected with all of them. In this way the commanding law has the power to produce moral action in an institutionalized form. It is, generally speaking, what the Reformers called the "first use of the law," its power to produce "civil justice," since obedience to the laws makes the existence of society possible. From the point of view of the unconditional moral imperative, and love as the ultimate principle of moral commands, these methods of motivating moral action are compromises, unavoidable in view of the human predicament, but far removed from the true nature of the moral. This is true not only because of the universal human estrangement, the struggle between man's essential and existential nature, the ambiguity of good and evil in every life process, the mixture of moral and amoral motives in every moral act, but also because social institutions as well as personal habits have an almost irresistible tendency to perpetuate themselves in disregards of the demands of creative justice in a new situation or under unique conditions, both in the communal and in the individual life. To summarize: the law provides moral motivation if morality becomes a thread within a texture of pre-moral forces and motives.

To acknowledge this aspect of man's predicament is an act of humility, demanded by honest self-evaluation. But this demand is not fulfilled by most people. They evaluate their highly ambiguous moral achievements as sufficiently perfect, morally speaking; and there are even some who evaluate them as expressions of the nearly perfect or most perfect moral fulfillment. They consider themselves as "moral men," or as "men of good

* [The second lecture in this volume of Tillich, entitled "The Religious Source of the Moral Demands."—Eds. G. and M.]

will," and look down on those who are "immoral men" or who at least do not belong to the selected group of the "men of good will." They do not see the ambiguity of their goodness and the mixture of their motives. They are not hypocritical, but self-assured in their high moral standing. They do not feel that they need forgiveness, either in Christian or in humanist terms. They defend the motivating power of the moral law, pointing to themselves as examples.

But some of these "moral men" and some of the "immoral men" are, at some point, grasped by the unconditional seriousness of the moral imperative, and they then recognize its deep opposition to them, even to the best qualities in them. This experience unites Paul the "righteous Pharisee," and Augustine the "sinner," and Luther the "ascetic monk." They took the moral imperative without compromise and without self-deception, and concluded that the "naked" moral law has no motivating power. They looked for something that had this power, and they found it in the religious element which they called "grace," a word that required much interpretation to become an answer also for us.

But before discussing grace as the power of moral motivation, I should like to recall two concepts which belong together and represent the highest levels that Greek humanism reached in solving the question of moral motivation, and which remain decisive for the amalgamation of the moral with the cultural.

One is classically expressed by Socrates when he speaks of the knowing of the good, which creates the doing of the good. The question, of course, is: what kind of knowledge can create moral action? It is immediately clear that it cannot be the detached knowledge of prescientific or scientific inquiry, nor can it be the practical knowledge of the day-to-day handling of things and people, even if such knowledge is elevated to the level of technical expertise or psychological skill, for any of this can be used for the performance of the most anti-moral actions. (Our most flagrant modern example of this is the Nazi system.) Since we cannot assume, unlike some of his critics, that Socrates was cognizant of this danger, we must search for another kind of knowledge he might have had in mind. Perhaps we approximate it when we use the modern term "insight." If Socrates did mean "insight," he stands in line with his great predecessors—for example, Heraclitus and Parmenides. Heraclitus' attack against those who are "fools" is not a criticism of the unsophisticated, but of those not subject to the power of the *logos,* the universal law of things and mind, the source of the physical and moral laws. Those who are not grasped by the *logos* are fools, and he directs his prophetic-philosophical wrath against them. In this way he established the idea of the wise man who unites knowledge with personal involvement in the universal *logos,* an idea which became of immense practical significance in the humanist-

religious philosophy of the Stoics. Wisdom became the leading virtue in the later ancient world, combining cognition and morality.

Knowledge of the character of wisdom cannot be considered as functioning in one direction only, as the cause of moral action, because it is in itself partly a result of moral action. Since one must be good in order to be wise, goodness is not a consequence of wisdom. The Socratic assertion, therefore, that knowledge creates virtue must be interpreted as knowledge in which the whole person is involved (insight). That is, a cognitive act which is united with a moral act can cause further moral acts (and further cognition).

It is worthwhile to look, in addition to the Heraclitean-Stoic tradition, to that of Parmenides and the Gospel of John. In the philosophical poem about being and nonbeing, Parmenides describes the visionary experience in which the goddess of justice (!) opens his eyes to the true way of asking the ultimate questions. He derives his insight from a kind of revelatory act which takes away his blindness to the truth, and guides him not to a better method of research (although this is an important consequence of his insight), but to a way of life as a whole. In the Fourth Gospel we also find passages in which truth is being. Jesus says, "I *am* the truth." There are others which state that truth can be done, those who do the truth will recognize the truth. Here the gap between the cognitive and the moral is conquered, and again it is obvious that this kind of insight cannot precede the moral act and motivate it, since it is itself partly a moral act.

A modern analogy to these ideas is provided by the psychotherapeutic experience. It clearly shows the difference between detached knowledge and participating insight. No one is helped in his personal problems by a thorough knowledge of the psychoanalytic literature. On the contrary, the analyst knows that a patient who claims to have insight into his own pathological state on the basis of such knowledge deceives himself, and often sets up an almost insuperable resistance against gaining true insight about himself. Only he who enters the healing process with his whole being, cognitive as well as moral, and therefore with emotional attachment to the process and its different elements, has a chance of gaining healing. But this cannot occur without a "walk through hell," the suffering implicit in the awareness of the dark, ordinarily repressed elements in our being. Here also, the moral change is only partly an effect of insight, as insight itself is partly an effect of the moral will to be liberated.

There is another concept by which classical Greek humanism attempted to answer the question of moral motivation. It is the concept of *eros* as used by Plato. In the second chapter we defined it as the mystical quality of love. This description of *eros* depends both on Plato's use of the word

in the *Symposium* and on the reintroduction of the word into Christian mysticism by Dionysios the Areopagite. *Eros* for Plato is a mediating power, elevating the human mind out of existential bondage into the realm of pure essences, and finally to the essence of all essences—the idea of the good that is, at the same time, the idea of the beautiful and the true. As in the other examples of Greek tradition, the moral and the cognitive are not separate. *Eros* provides both insight and moral motivation, and there is a third element, the aesthetic desire for the beautiful which is implied in the good. This goal can be attained by *eros* as a divine-human power that transcends the moral command without denying it. *Eros* is the transmoral motivation for moral action.

To be impelled by *eros* can also be described as being grasped by that toward which *eros* drives. And thus we return to the principle of love, as discussed in the second chapter. It is one of the qualities of love that concerns us here—the mystical, the drive toward reunion with essential being in everything, ultimately with the good as the principle of being and knowing (in Platonic terms). Love in all its qualities drives toward reunion. *Eros,* as distinct from *philia* and *libido,* drives toward reunion with things and persons in their essential goodness and with the good itself. For mystical theology, God and the good itself are identical; therefore the love toward the good itself is, in religious language, love toward God. This love can be symbolized in two ways: in Plato it is the divine-human power of *eros* that elevates the mind to the divine; and in Aristotle, it is the power of the divine that attracts every finite thing and produces by this attraction the movement of the stars, the universe, and the human mind.

According to both formulations it is not the moral imperative in its commanding majesty and strangeness that is morally motivating, but the driving or attracting power of that which is the goal of the moral command—the good. The Greeks were aware of the fact that the moral realm, in the sense of personal and communal justice, does not furnish moral motivation unless it is understood as a station on the way to something ultimate in being and meaning—the divine. And the aim of everything finite is to participate in the life of the divine. The moral stage is a station on the way, and the motivation for it depends on the motivation for the transmoral aim, the participation in the divine life, as Aristotle expresses it both rationally and symbolically. These are the forms in which Greek humanism and its ethical thought expressed, in mystical-religious terms, the transmoral motivation of morality.

Again I should like to point out a contemporary analogy in the realm of therapeutic psychology. The question is whether *libido* is unlimited in itself or only under the conditions of human estrangement. Our line of thought decides for the latter (as opposed to Freud and his doctrine of the essential necessity of cultural uneasiness and the death-drive). The

difference is that essential *libido* (toward food or sex, for example) is concretely directed to a particular object and is satisfied in the union with it, while existentially distorted *libido* is directed to the pleasure which may be derived from the relation to any encountered object. This drives existential *libido* boundlessly from object to object, while the essential *libido* is fulfilled if union with a particular object is achieved. This distinguishes the lover from the "Don Juan," and *agape*-directed *libido* from undirected *libido*. The moral imperative cannot be obeyed by a repression of *libido*, but only by the power of *agape* to control *libido* and to take it into itself as an element.

Eros is a divine-human power. It cannot be produced at will. It has the character of *charis, gratia,* "grace"—that which is given without prior merit and makes graceful him to whom it is given. It is useful to remember the origins of the word "grace," because it plays an immense role in Christian religion and theology, and its meaning and relevance have become incomprehensible for most contemporaries both inside and outside the church. Graces are divine gifts, independent of human merit, but dependent on the human readiness to receive them. And the readiness itself is the first gift of grace, which can be either preserved or lost.

Theology has distinguished between "common" grace that works in all realms of life and in all human relations, and the special grace bestowed upon those who are grasped by the new reality that has appeared in the Christ. In both respects, the problem of moral motivation is decisive. What common and special grace accomplish is to create a state of reunion in which the cleavage between our true and our actual being is fragmentarily overcome, and the rule of the commanding law is broken.

Where there is grace there is no command and no struggle to obey the command. This is true of all realms of life. He who has the grace of loving a thing, a task, a person, or an idea does not need to be asked to love, whatever quality of love may be predominant in his love. A reunion of something separated has already taken place, and with it a partial fulfillment of the moral imperative. As a gift of grace, it is not produced by one's will and one's endeavor. One simply receives it. In this sense we may say: there is grace in every reunion of being with being, insofar as it *is* reunion and not the misuse of the one by the other, insofar as justice is not violated.

Elements of grace permeate everyone's life. One could also call them healing powers that overcome the split between what we essentially are and what we actually are, and with this split the estrangement of life from life and the hidden or open hostility of life against life. Whenever elements of grace appear, the moral command is fulfilled. What was demanded, now is given. But what was given can be lost. And it will be lost, if one forgets that grace fulfills what the moral imperative demands,

and that it affirms and does not replace the unconditional seriousness of morality. Therefore, as soon as grace is lost, the commanding law takes over and produces the painful experience of being unable to become what one could and should have become.

This suffering under the moral law finally drives us to the question of the meaning of our existence in the light of the unconditional moral command which cuts into our finite and estranged predicament. We feel that the many gifts of common grace do not suffice; we ask for a grace as unconditional as the moral imperative and as infinite as our failure to fulfill it. We ask for the religious element of moral motivation directly, after we have experienced its indirect effect as common grace in the different realms of life.

The Christian message is above all a message of grace. There is no religion without this element. The Old Testament, where the law plays such a decisive role, refers in every part to the divine covenant between God and the selected nation, and to the promises beyond all threats and judgments. We might cite similar examples from many other religions. But Christianity, particularly under the impact of the Protestant Reformation, has emphasized the idea of grace more than any other religion. The concept of grace in Christian thought contains a polarity between the element of forgiveness and the element of fulfillment. The former can be expressed as the forgiveness of sins or—in a paradoxical phrase—the acceptance of the unacceptable. The latter can be described as the gift of the Spirit or the infusion of love controlled by *agape*. The former conquers the pain of morally unfulfilled existence, and the latter grants the blessedness of an at least fragmentary fulfillment. Neither is possible without the other, for only he who is grasped by the Spirit can accept the tremendous paradox that he is accepted. Nothing is more difficult than to face one's image in the mirror of the law and to say "yes" to it in terms of "in spite of." It demands much grace to reach this state. And on the other hand, the fragmentary fulfillment through grace can bestow blessedness only if the paradox of forgiveness conquers the pain of missing fulfillment or of lost grace.

Here the skeptical question may arise as to whether the paradox of grace diminishes the power of moral motivation in those who accept that they are accepted, although unacceptable. It is a very old question, used against Paul as well as against Augustine, against Luther as well as against Calvin, and against the Reformation as a whole by the humanists and the evangelical radicals. It is a justified question insofar as it points to the possibility of converting the paradox of grace into a cover for lawlessness. But the question is not justified in principle, because it shows that one has not understood that the courage to accept the unacceptable is a work of grace, a creation of the Spiritual power. Only if

the acceptance of the unacceptable is misunderstood as a merely intellectual act does it remain without moral motivating power. Orthodoxy (in contrast to the early Luther) is largely responsible for this intellectual distortion of the paradox of acceptance of the unacceptable and, consequently, for the attacks on the Pauline principles in the name of morality.

The question of moral motivation can be answered only transmorally. For the law demands, but cannot forgive; it judges, but cannot accept. Therefore, forgiveness and acceptance, the conditions of the fulfillment of the law, must come from something above the law, or more precisely, from something in which the split between our essential being and our existence is overcome and healing power has appeared. It is the center of the Christian message that this conquest took place in the Christ, in whom a new reality beyond the cleavage appeared. It is therefore a moralistic distortion of Christianity to interpret the so-called "teachings of Jesus" as another law, heavier than the law of Moses. His words (not his "teachings") point the way to the new reality in which the law is not abolished, but has ceased to be commanding.

The first three chapters of this volume have sought to demonstrate that the relation of religion and morality is not an external one, but that the religious dimension, source, and motivation are implicit in all morality, acknowledged or not. Morality does not depend on any concrete religion; it is religious in its very essence. The unconditional character of the moral imperative, love as the ultimate source of the moral commands, and grace as the power of moral motivation are the concepts through which the question of the relation of religion and morality is fundamentally answered.

Tillich's contribution to ethics lies largely in his acceptance of the radical relativities of conscience introduced by Kierkegaard, Troeltsch, Freud, and others, while maintaining a significant use of the term "moral imperative." The conscience has both its fallen, despairing side and its transcendent, "transmoral" side. Every free choice takes place on the difficult line between new possibilities of discipleship and despair about all existing possibilities. The conscience lives in freedom only *between* the guilt of the past and the coming of new hope.

Tillich can accept all the implications of the apparent impasse in the modern understanding of freedom and still affirm the meaningfulness of purpose and obligation. He can accept the "dreadful freedom" of Kierkegaard and still find a Kantian imperative mingled with it. In the very midst of pain and distortion of conscience he finds the moving presence of freedom from beyond.

7. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1906-1945

German theologian, writer, resistance worker, and modern Christian martyr. Born in Breslau, son of well-known psychiatrist at Berlin University. Studied at Tübingen and Berlin, influenced by Harnack and others, but chiefly Barth. In 1928–29 was pastor in Barcelona, received Ph.D. 1930, in 1930–31 studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York, then began teaching in Berlin. In 1933–35 held a German pastorate in London in order to protest openly against Nazi influence in the Church in Germany. Recalled by colleagues to take part in the Confessing Church (a resistance movement of the clergy) and to run a training school for ministers. Visited United States in 1939, urged by both German and American friends to stay, but returned to Germany where he was forbidden to teach, write, speak in public, or remain in Berlin. A courier in the resistance movement, he was arrested in 1943, held in various prisons and a concentration camp, and hanged by the Nazis in April 1945 shortly before the liberation.

"Before other men the man of free responsibility is justified by necessity; before himself he is acquitted by his conscience; but before God he hopes only for mercy."

From manuscripts written between 1940 and 1943, before his arrest, has come a group of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's fragmentary writings under the title *Ethics.*[1] This collection contains his discussion of the relation between inclination and obligation. Bonhoeffer is of special interest because he accepts with utter seriousness the partial and historical character of human existence. Along with the developing consensus of nineteenth- and twentieth-century thought, he is convinced that man's nature cannot be described in general, but must be considered in its concrete individual and historical instance. Ethics does not aim principally at the good in any abstract or detached way. Freedom does not stand off from itself and contemplate a universal good. It is found, if at all, in the midst of life with all its conflicting obligations.

Written and originally published during the years 1937–51, Bonhoeffer's major writings in English translation include: The Cost of Discipleship, *R. H. Fuller, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959);* Creation and Fall, *J. C. Fletcher, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1959);* Ethics, *Eberhard Bethge, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955); and* Prisoner for God: Letters and Papers from Prison, *R. H. Fuller, trans. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961).*

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[1] Paperback edition (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965).

Rather than seeking knowledge of the abstract Good, Bonhoeffer believes that ethics is better informed by looking to the historical existence of Jesus Christ. Here is the reliable example of the true quality of human nature. The fact of his life is decisive for any discussion of man's being. History is the story of the way in which that one event is shaping the many other events of human life on earth and in time. The life of Jesus discloses the unity between being and becoming, between the universal and the particular. In him men learn that history is active partnership with God. Bonhoeffer is not willing to speak of man's history or existence in the abstract. He always begins with the individual man Jesus, in whose particular life the genuine existence of all other men may be seen.

Bonhoeffer's Christocentric point of view is not to be understood simply as a kind of mysticism. Nor is it a return to devout imagining of "what Jesus would do" (though this is not to be scorned). Rather, it is a way of speaking of man as he actually exists. In Bonhoeffer's theology Jesus functions in the same way as the *Dasein* in Martin Heidegger's philosophy.[2] The starting point for Heidegger is "being there," rather than any abstract being-in-general or an isolated self-in-general. So also for Bonhoeffer, along with Karl Barth and others, the point of departure is "God with us" (Jesus Christ) rather than any abstract doctrine of God-in-general or isolated faith-in-general. Jesus Christ is the presence of freedom within the limitations of existence. He is the only access man has to the Good.

Existence in Christ is a life of responsibility. By this Bonhoeffer means "the concentrated totality and unity of the response to the reality which is given to us in Jesus Christ. . . ." This is "distinct from the partial responses which might arise, for example, from a consideration of utility or from particular principles."[3] Responsibility stands between obligation to other men and freedom before God. This concept hinges on the fact that freedom is a gift to man, coming from beyond his circle of selfhood. Freedom is also his activity in response to what has already been given. And responsibility is to live one's life in behalf of someone else.

Human freedom, Bonhoeffer insists, is not to be found in attempts to follow universal principles of behavior. This is not to say that he considers principles irrelevant, for freedom listens to principles but is not servile to them. The free man acts in a living relationship with the neighbor and with God. "When the deed is performed with a responsible weighing up of all the personal and objective circumstances and in the awareness that

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[2] Heidegger uses this concept for concrete, specific human existence. He insists that the fundamental being of man cannot be understood abstractly. It must be grasped in its given particularities and expectations, of which the anticipation of death is most important. See Part III, chap. 13 below.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 222.

God has become *man* and that it is *God* who has become man, then this deed is delivered solely up to God at the moment of its performance."[4] Freedom is found not in the correspondence of an act to any pattern of universal standards, but in its performance within the limitations of the particular circumstance and moment of time.

In the following selections the writer begins by noting that we can never wisely disregard conscience, which is a call "from a depth which lies beyond a man's own will and his own reason." It is a call to restore the unity of human existence, a sign that that unity has been lost and that we are in danger of losing our self. Persistent disregard of this call results in actual destruction of one's being.

But what is unity of being? Bonhoeffer considers the behavior of the human ego in its attempts at self-justification and autonomy. Conscience in natural man is usually driven by an effort to reestablish that autonomy. For man is bound by law of his own finding. His inner unity is tied up with his knowledge of good and evil, a form of self-justification before God. He clings to this. It is a strange and wonderful contrast when unity is discovered rather through the miracle of faith—unity in Jesus Christ, who "becomes my conscience." This means surrender of the ego. The goal of conscience changes from law to the living God and the living man. This transpires in Christ, who sets conscience free to serve the neighbor and to take on human guilt for the sake of the neighbor.

Bonhoeffer describes Kant's sterile rigidity of moral obligation by the example of literal truthfulness when a murderer breaks into the house and demands whether the man he seeks is hidden there. Here the refusal to bear the guilt of a lie for charity's sake is self-righteousness inflated to a terrible degree of presumption. The conscience bound solely to Christ will prove its innocence by accepting the guilt of a "robust lie." In our excerpt, Goethe perfectly illustrates the same idea in the quoted dialogue between Pylades and Iphigenia.

Despite the urge to unity, responsibility and the conscience freed in Christ continue in a lasting tension. There are two limits to the bearing of guilt in responsible action. One is a man's "carrying power." He must not take on a degree of guilt which will destroy him, break down his unity within himself, for this would also destroy his power of responsible action. And this is an individual matter. (One wonders here in passing what unaccustomed guilt Bonhoeffer himself took on, in his role in the resistance.) The second limitation relates to feeling for moral law. Disregard produces irresponsibility. Love of God, the Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, the teaching of the apostles—in all these the "natural" conscience is in close agreement with the conscience set free in Christ,

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

for these are fundamental elements of the law of life. But now law is no longer final, and in a conflict the free decision must be for Christ. When a man takes guilt on himself—"and no responsible man can avoid this"—he accepts it and does not put it off on anyone else. He knows that this freedom is forced on him, and in it he is dependent on grace.

Responsibility and freedom are correlated realities. The writer shows how this must be so, and how action must be performed in the light of the sole obligation to God and our neighbor in Jesus Christ. All action has to be judged in a "twilight" of relativeness: not right versus wrong, but often right as against right and wrong as against wrong. And often without ultimate valid knowledge of either good or evil.

Against this austere background Bonhoeffer develops the nature of obligation, and how history is made and the "good" of God performed. He discusses the relation of responsibility and obedience, especially in German culture, which has made such demands for obedience. They are, he finds, at their best deeply interlinked. The apprentice is responsible for his master as well as his own work. The same is true for the student, the soldier, the employee. Here, too, the right relation derives from our own rapport with God in Christ. Neither the man of pure duty nor the man of willful genius—a law unto himself—has the real answer. But the responsible man "delivers up himself and his deed to God."

Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* was the projected main work of his life, cut short by his martyrdom in 1945. His papers for the book, incomplete and hastily concealed in great disorder, were later put together as far as possible in accordance with his own (also incomplete) notes on the possible arrangement of the book. The following excerpts are from Part I, Chapter VI, entitled "History and Good," the section headed "The Structure of Responsible Life": subsections "Conscience" (omitting the first paragraph) and "Freedom" (omitting the last).

CONSCIENCE

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It is true that it can never be advisable to act against one's own conscience. All Christian ethics is agreed in this. But what does that mean? Conscience comes from a depth which lies beyond a man's own will and his own reason and it makes itself heard as the call of human existence to unity with itself. Conscience comes as an indictment of the loss of this unity and as a warning against the loss of one's self. Primarily it is

directed not towards a particular kind of doing but towards a particular mode of being. It protests against a doing which imperils the unity of this being with itself.

So long as conscience can be formally defined in these terms it is extremenly inadvisable to act against its authority; disregard for the call of conscience will necessarily entail the destruction of one's own being, not even a purposeful surrender of it; it will bring about the decline and collapse of a human existence. Action against one's own conscience runs parallel with suicidal action against one's own life, and it is not by chance that the two often go together. Responsible action which did violence to conscience in this formal sense would indeed be reprehensible.

But that is not by any means the end of the question. The call of conscience arises from the imperilling of a man's unity with himself, and it is therefore now necessary to ask what constitutes this unity. The first constituent is the man's own ego in its claim to be 'like God,' *sicut deus,* in the knowledge of good and evil. The call of conscience in natural man is the attempt on the part of the ego to justify itself in its knowledge of good and evil before God, before men and before itself, and to secure its own continuance in this self-justification. Finding no firm support in its own contingent individuality the ego traces its own derivation back to a universal law of good and seeks to achieve unity with itself in conformity with this law. Thus the call of conscience has its origin and its goal in the autonomy of a man's own ego. A man's purpose in obeying this call is on each occasion anew that he should himself once more realize this autonomy which has its origin beyond his own will and knowledge 'in Adam.' Thus in his conscience he continues to be bound by a law of his own finding, a law which may assume different concrete forms but which he can transgress only at the price of losing his own self.

We can now understand that the great change takes place at the moment when the unity of human existence ceases to consist in its autonomy and is found, through the miracle of faith, beyond the man's own ego and its law, in Jesus Christ. The form of this change in the point of unity has an exact analogy in the secular sphere. When the national socialist says 'My conscience is Adolf Hitler' that, too, is an attempt to find a foundation for the unity of his own ego somewhere beyond himself. The consequence of this is the surrender of one's autonomy for the sake of an unconditional heteronomy, and this in turn is possible only if the other man, the man to whom I look for the unity of my life, fulfils the function of a redeemer for me. This, then, provides an extremely direct and significant parallel to the Christian truth, and at the same time an extremely direct and significant contrast with it.

When Christ, true God and true man, has become the point of unity of my existence, conscience will indeed still formally be the call of my

actual being to unity with myself, but this unity cannot now be realized by means of a return to the autonomy which I derive from the law; it must be realized in fellowship with Jesus Christ. Natural conscience, no matter how strict and rigorous it may be, is now seen to be the most ungodly self-justification, and it is overcome by the conscience which is set free in Jesus Christ and which summons me to unity with myself in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has become my conscience. This means that I can now find unity with myself only in the surrender of my ego to God and to men. The origin and the goal of my conscience is not a law but it is the living God and the living man as he confronts me in Jesus Christ. For the sake of God and of men Jesus became a breaker of the law. He broke the law of the sabbath in order to keep it holy in love for God and for men. He forsook His parents in order to dwell in the house of His Father and thereby to purify His obedience towards His parents. He sat at table with sinners and outcasts; and for the love of men He came to be forsaken by God in His last hour. As the one who loved without sin, He became guilty; He wished to share in the fellowship of human guilt; He rejected the devil's accusation which was intended to divert Him from this course. Thus it is Jesus Christ who sets conscience free for the service of God and of our neighbor; He sets conscience free even and especially when man enters into the fellowship of human guilt. The conscience which has been set free from the law will not be afraid to enter into the guilt of another man for the other man's sake, and indeed precisely in doing this it will show itself in its purity. The conscience which has been set free is not timid like the conscience which is bound by the law, but it stands wide open for our neighbor and for his concrete distress. And so conscience joins with the responsibility which has its foundation in Christ in bearing guilt for the sake of our neighbour. Human action is poisoned in a way which differs from essential original sin, yet as responsible action, in contrast to any self-righteously high-principled action, it nevertheless indirectly has a part in the action of Jesus Christ. For responsible action, therefore, there is a kind of relative freedom from sin, and this shows itself precisely in the responsible acceptance of the guilt of others.

From the principle of truthfulness Kant draws the grotesque conclusion that I must even return an honest 'yes' to the enquiry of the murderer who breaks into my house and asks whether my friend whom he is pursuing has taken refuge there; in such a case self-righteousness of conscience has become outrageous presumption and blocks the path of responsible action. Responsibility is the total and realistic response of man to the claim of God and of our neighbour; but this example shows in its true light how the response of a conscience which is bound by principles is only a partial one. If I refuse to incur guilt against the princi-

ple of truthfulness for the sake of my friend, if I refuse to tell a robust lie for the sake of my friend (for it is only the self-righteously law-abiding conscience which will pretend that, in fact, no lie is involved), if, in other words, I refuse to bear guilt for charity's sake, then my action is in contradiction to my responsibility which has its foundation in reality. Here again it is precisely in the responsible acceptance of guilt that a conscience which is bound solely to Christ will best prove its innocence.

It is astonishing how close Goethe came to these ideas with a purely profane knowledge of reality. In the dialogue in which Pylades tries to persuade Iphigenia to overcome the inner law and to act responsibly we read:

PYLADES An over-strict demand is secret pride.
IPHIGENIA The spotless heart alone is satisfied.[1]
PYLADES Here in the temple you no doubt were so;
And yet life teaches us to be less strict
With others and ourselves; you too will learn.
This human kind is intricately wrought
With knots and ties so manifold that none
Within himself or with the rest can keep
Himself quiet disentangled and quite pure.
We are not competent to judge ourselves;
Man's first and foremost duty is to go
Forward and think about his future course:
For he can seldom know what he has done,
And what he now is doing even less . . .
One sees that you have rarely suffered loss;
For if that were not so you would not now
Refuse this one false word to escape this evil.
IPHIGENIA Would my heart like a man's could be resolved
And then be deaf to any other voice!

However greatly responsibility and the conscience which is set free in Christ may desire to be united, they nevertheless continue to confront one another in a relation of irreducible tension. Conscience imposes two kinds of limit upon that bearing of guilt which from time to time becomes necessary in responsible action.

In the first place, the conscience which is set free in Christ is still essentially the summons to unity with myself. The acceptance of a responsibility must not destroy this unity. The surrender of the ego in selfless service must never be confused with the destruction and annihilation of this ego; for then indeed this ego would no longer be capable of

[1] (More exactly: . . . has enjoyment of itself.) The introduction of the characteristic concept of "enjoyment" is also to be noted here.

assuming responsibility. The extent of the guilt which may be accepted in the pursuit of responsible action is on each occasion concretely limited by the requirement of the man's unity with himself, that is to say, by his carrying power. There are responsibilities which I cannot carry without breaking down under their weight; it may be a declaration of war, the violation of a political treaty, a revolution or merely the discharge of a single employee who thereby loses the means of supporting his family; or it may be simply a piece of advice in connexion with some personal decisions in life. Certainly the strength to bear responsible decisions can and should grow; certainly any failure to fulfil a responsibility is in itself already a responsible decision; and yet in the concrete instance the summons of conscience to unity with oneself in Jesus Christ remains irresistible, and it is this which explains the infinite multiplicity of responsible decisions.

Secondly, even when it is set free in Jesus Christ conscience still confronts responsible action with the law, through obedience to which man is preserved in that unity with himself which has its foundation in Jesus Christ. Disregard for this law can give rise only to irresponsibility. This is the law of love for God and for our neighbour as it is explained in the decalogue, in the sermon on the mount and in the apostolic paranesis. It has been correctly observed that in the contents of its law natural conscience is in strikingly close agreement with that of the conscience which has been set free in Christ. This is due to the fact that it is upon conscience that the continuance of life itself depends; conscience, therefore, contains fundamental features of the law of life, even though these features may be distorted in detail and perverted in principle. The liberated conscience is still what it was as the natural conscience, namely the warner against transgression of the law of life. But the law is no longer the last thing; there is still Jesus Christ; for that reason, in the contest between conscience and concrete responsibility, the free decision must be given for Christ. This does not mean an everlasting conflict, but the winning of ultimate unity; for indeed the foundation, the essence and the goal of concrete responsibility is the same Jesus Christ who is the Lord of conscience. Thus responsibility is bound by conscience, but conscience is set free by responsibility. It is now clear that it is the same thing if we say that the responsible man becomes guilty without sin or if we say that only the man with a free conscience can bear responsibility.

When a man takes guilt upon himself in responsibility, and no responsible man can avoid this, he imputes this guilt to himself and to no one else; he answers for it; he accepts responsibility for it. He does not do this in the insolent presumptuousness of his own power, but he does it in the knowledge that this liberty is forced upon him and that in this liberty he is dependent on grace. Before other men the man of free

responsibility is justified by necessity; before himself he is acquitted by his conscience; but before God he hopes only for mercy.

FREEDOM

We must therefore conclude our analysis of the structure of responsible action by speaking of freedom.

Responsibility and freedom are corresponding concepts. Factually, though not chronologically, responsibility presupposes freedom and freedom can consist only in responsibility. Responsibility is the freedom of men which is given only in the obligation to God and to our neighbour.

The responsible man acts in the freedom of his own self, without the support of men, circumstances or principles, but with a due consideration for the given human and general conditions and for the relevant questions of principle. The proof of his freedom is the fact that nothing can answer for him, nothing can exonerate him, except his own deed and his own self. It is he himself who must observe, judge, weigh up, decide and act. It is man himself who must examine the motives, the prospects, the value and the purpose of his action. But neither the purity of the motivation, nor the opportune circumstances, nor the value, nor the significant purpose of an intended undertaking can become the governing law of his action, a law to which he can withdraw, to which he can appeal as an authority, and by which he can be exculpated and acquitted.[2] For in that case he would indeed no longer be truly free. The action of the responsible man is performed in the obligation which alone gives freedom and which gives entire freedom, the obligation to God and to our neighbour as they confront us in Jesus Christ. At the same time it is performed wholly within the domain of relativity, wholly in the twilight which the historical situation spreads over good and evil; it is performed in the midst of the innumerable perspectives in which every given phenomenon appears. It has not to decide simply between right and wrong and between good and evil, but between right and right and between wrong and wrong. As Aeschylus said, 'right strives with right.' Precisely in this respect responsible action is a free venture; it is not justified by any law; it is performed without any claim to a valid self-justification, and therefore also without any claim to an ultimate valid knowledge of good and evil. Good, as what is responsible, is performed in ignorance of good and in the surrender to God of the deed which has become necessary and which is nevertheless, or for that very reason, free; for it is God who sees the heart, who weighs up the deed, and who directs the course of history.

[2] This makes it unnecessary to raise the fallacious question of determinism and indeterminism, in which the essence of mental decision is incorrectly substituted for the law of causality.

With this there is disclosed to us a deep secret of history in general. The man who acts in the freedom of his own most personal responsibility is precisely the man who sees his action finally committed to the guidance of God. The free deed knows itself in the end as the deed of God, the decision knows itself as guidance; the free venture knows itself as divine necessity. It is in the free abandonment of knowledge of his own good that a man performs the good of God. It is only from this last point of view that one can speak of good in historical action. We shall have to take up these considerations again later at the point at which we have left off.

Before that we still have to give some space to a crucial question which makes an essential contribution to the clarification of our problem. What is the relationship between free responsibility and obedience? It must seem at first sight as though everything we have said about free responsibility is applicable in practice only when a man finds himself in what we call a 'responsible position' in life, in other words when he has to take independent decisions on the very largest scale. What connexion can there be between responsibility and the monotonous daily work of the labourer, the factory worker, the clerk, the private soldier, the apprentice or the schoolboy? It is a different matter already with the owner-farmer, the industrial contractor, the politician or statesman, the general, the master craftsman, the teacher and the judge. But in their lives, too, how much there is of technique and duty and how little of really free decision! And so it seems that everything that we have said about responsibility can in the end apply only to a very small group of men, and even to these only in a few moments of their lives; and consequently it seems as though for the great majority of men one must speak not of responsibility but of obedience and duty. This implies one ethic for the great and the strong, for the rulers, and another for the small and the weak, the subordinates; on the one hand responsibility and on the other obedience, on the one hand freedom and on the other subservience. And indeed there can be no doubt that in our modern social order, and especially in the German one, the life of the individual is so exactly defined and regulated, and is at the same time assured of such complete security, that it is granted to only very few men to breathe the free air of the wide open spaces of great decisions and to experience the hazard of responsible action which is entirely their own. In consequence of the compulsory regulation of life in accordance with a definite course of training and vocational activity, our lives have come to be relatively free from ethical dangers; the individual who from his childhood on has had to take his assigned place in accordance with this principle is ethically emasculated; he has been robbed of the creative moral power, freedom. In this we see a deep-seated fault in the essential development of our modern social order, a fault which can be countered only with a clear exposition of

the fundamental concept of responsibility. As things stand, the large-scale experiential material for the problem of responsibility must be sought for among the great political leaders, industrialists and generals; for indeed those few others who venture to act on their own free responsibility in the midst of the pressure of everyday life are crushed by the machinery of the social order, by the general routine.

Yet it would be an error if we were to continue to look at the problem from this point of view. There is, in fact, no single life which cannot experience the situation of responsibility; every life can experience this situation in its most characteristic form, that is to say, in the encounter with other people. Even when free responsibility is more or less excluded from a man's vocational and public life, he nevertheless always stands in a responsible relation to other men; these relations extend from his family to his workmates. The fulfilment of genuine responsibility at this point affords the only sound possibility of extending the sphere of responsibility once more into vocational and public life. Where man meets man—and this includes the encounters of professional life—there arises genuine responsibility, and these responsible relationships cannot be supplanted by any general regulation or routine. That holds true, then, not only for the relation between married people, or for parents and children, but also for the master and the apprentice, the teacher and his pupil, the judge and the accused.

But we can go one step further than this. Responsibility does not only stand side by side with relationships of obedience; it has its place also within these relationships. The apprentice has a duty of obedience towards his master, but at the same time he has also a free responsibility for his work, for his achievement and, therefore, also for his master. It is the same with the schoolboy and the student, and indeed also with the employee in any kind of industrial undertaking and with the soldier in war. Obedience and responsibility are interlinked in such a way that one cannot say that responsibility begins only where obedience leaves off, but rather that obedience is rendered in responsibility. There will always be a relation of obedience and dependence; all that matters is that these should not, as they already largely do today, leave no room for responsibilities. To know himself to be responsible is more difficult for the man who is socially dependent than for the man who is socially free, but a relationship of dependence does not in any case in itself exclude free responsibility. The master and the servant, while preserving the relationship of obedience, can and should answer for each other in free responsibility.

The ultimate reason for this lies in that relation of men to God which is realized in Jesus Christ. Jesus stands before God as the one who is both obedient and free. As the obedient one He does His Father's will

in blind compliance with the law which is commanded Him, and as the free one He acquiesces in God's will out of His own most personal knowledge, with open eyes and a joyous heart; He recreates this will, as it were, out of Himself. Obedience without freedom is slavery; freedom without obedience is arbitrary self-will. Obedience restrains freedom; and freedom ennobles obedience. Obedience binds the creature to the Creator, and freedom enables the creature to stand before the Creator as one who is made in His image. Obedience shows man that he must allow himself to be told what is good and what God requires of him (Micah 6.8); and liberty enables him to do good himself. Obedience knows what is good and does it, and freedom dares to act, and abandons to God the judgment of good and evil. Obedience follows blindly and freedom has open eyes. Obedience acts without questioning and freedom asks what is the purpose. Obedience has its hands tied and freedom is creative. In obedience man adheres to the decalogue and in freedom man creates new decalogues (Luther).

In responsibility both obedience and freedom are realized. Responsibility implies tension between obedience and freedom. There would be no more responsibility if either were made independent of the other. Responsible action is subject to obligation, and yet it is creative. To make obedience independent of freedom leads only to the Kantian ethic of duty, and to make freedom independent of obedience leads only to the ethic of irresponsible genius. Both the man of duty and the genius carry their justification within themselves. The man of responsibility stands between obligation and freedom; he must dare to act under obligation and in freedom; yet he finds his justification neither in his obligation nor in his freedom but solely in Him who has put him in this (humanly impossible) situation and who requires this deed of him. The responsible man delivers up himself and his deed to God.

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Bonhoeffer concurs with the description of conscience given by Kierkegaard and Freud. It is bound to the history of its own growth, and constantly distorted by guilt and condemnation. In its fallenness it is the silent call of self-being to restore inner unity. When defined by its own vicious circle of derivation and activity, it is thrown into shame and guilt. Reoriented to the particular existence of Jesus Christ, it is no longer driven to despair. Man's various inclinations and obligations become centered outside themselves in the one Man who is their true unity.

Here the problem set by Kant, in the separation of obligation and inclination, turns back upon itself. Rather than strive constantly to heal that separation, one may now act in the freedom that came into potential being with a particular history centered in a particular Man. This potential is realized as we grasp it. Faith neither creates nor fully comprehends

the unity of human nature, but accepts and responds to the unity disclosed in Christ. Faith is a free act, in open relation to both inclination and obligation. It has both the courage and the humility not to allow either element to control the self. The guilt of conflict between them may be freely accepted and acted on. There is no longer a search for some ideal underlying oneness of duty and desire, but sensitive response to a powerful unity that is already present and active in man's fragmentary existence.

8. Anders Nygren: Agape and Eros

We pause only long enough to note a very important issue in the recent development of Christian ethics and to show how it relates to our story. It is the question of the nature of Christian love. The man who more than others has influenced recent discussions of this subject is Anders Nygren, Bishop of Lund, Sweden.* He approached his study of the essentials of Christian love by a method he calls "motif analysis,"[1] which is directly in line with Kant's discussion of obligation.

Bishop Nygren sharply contrasts *agape* and *eros*. The latter type of love is acquisitive, upward-moving, "man's way to God," egocentric, self-assertive, and capable of *recognizing* value in the object toward which it moves. Agape, on the other hand, is sacrificial, downward-moving, self-giving, self-losing, spontaneous, and capable of *creating* value in its object. Eros is the type of man's search for God: the best and ultimate that he can try to reach, and his own salvation. Agape is the type of God's love for man—expressed, as are all shaping manifestations of God in human life, through man as instrument.

This contrasting description has been highly influential in contemporary discussions of ethics. It has been taken up by Reinhold Niebuhr, Barth, Tillich, and many others. The alternatives seen in the agape-eros relation precisely parallel the various developments of the obligation-inclination contrast. Nygren assumes a Kantian approach in which all eros is systematically and categorically excluded from agape. But he goes beyond Kant's duty of respect for the person, whether self or neighbor. Agape is a spontaneous act of self-giving for the sake of the neighbor.

Niebuhr takes the Kierkegaardian position that agape is always an open possibility, but that every expression or partial expression of it includes elements of eros. The two always stand in paradoxical relationship. Paul Tillich believes that the two are united in the moment (kairos) when God's grace moves into human existence. They are dimensions of the unity of life (as also are *epithemai* and *philia*, other Greek terms for forms of love: instinctive passion on one hand, and brotherly affection on the other).[2]

Barth is critical of Nygren's approach as well as of Kierkegaard's. Agape and eros, he thinks, are united from beyond themselves by God's electing love. "Christian love does not need to measure itself by *eros*-love, or to find its strength and satisfaction in its difference from it. It

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* *Born November 15, 1890 in Göteborg, Sweden. Most of professional life given to teaching systematic theology. Served as president of the Lutheran World Federation, 1947–52, and as Bishop of Lund, 1949–58.*

[1] See Nygren's now classic discussion of this subject: *Agape and Eros* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954).

[2] See his *Love, Power and Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960).

lives its own life as the love which is true because it is grounded in God's love for man and not in man's self-love. . . . I say this in face of the rigidity with which A. Nygren constantly underlines the antithesis between *eros* and *agape*. But I say it also in face of S. Kierkegaard's stimulating exposition of the 'life and rule of love.' "[3] The reader will find these representative parallels of obligation and inclination further developed in the next chapter.

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[3] *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), Vol. IV, Part 2, p. 747.

Chapter Ten

AN OBLIGATION-INCLINATION TYPOLOGY

We want now to note the various general types of attitude, or solution, that have been most prominent in this account of freedom and obligation. In the faith-fact story we found four principal ways of regarding that question. Here again we find four, somewhat analogous, ways of understanding the relation between inclination and obligation. The parallel is no accident, for attitudes toward history and freedom are both rooted in the various views of truth which we shall explore in Part III.

We have noted that any typology must be considered an abstraction from the content of the story itself and is by no means intended to replace the primary sources. It is useful only if it clarifies the thrusts and counter-thrusts that are really there. Others may tell the story differently, but we feel that the following types bring out the main points that have emerged as part of the living tradition. They speak to crucial issues much debated in the contemporay world.

1. *Obligation Marked Off from and Restricting Inclination*

Lessing gave classic form to the question of faith versus history, and we shall see that Descartes shaped Western thinking about the relation between subject and object in the perception of reality or "truth." So Immanuel Kant decisively separates all inclination from the sense of obligation in describing human freedom. He assumes that awareness of obligation is universally present as a rooted sense of moral law in all human experience. Respect for law is the only right expression of human freedom. The individual ought always to act as though his basis for action were universalized. Only thus does the logic of human behavior—embodied in personal principles subject to all the variety of human inclination—take on the character of genuine obligation to moral law.

This type is to be seen in considerably modified form in the work of Hegel, Ritschl, and Troeltsch. For Hegel obligation is dialectically opposed to inclination. In their conflict he sees greater dimensions of human

freedom revealed in history. Yet he insists that inclinations are shaped by the universal obligations that move within mankind, and are absorbed into them. Albrecht Ritschl similarly marked off value from fact. The human ability to act with value and purpose lifts man above the level of mere external fact and instinct.

Troeltsch, however, calls for a complete historicizing of human value. Man discerns value only by means of the broadest possible understanding of the social forces of history. It is constantly subject to reinterpretation from new historical vantage points. In his emphasis on objective moral values, historically understood, Troeltsch moved very much in the direction of other types set forth below. Yet his insistence on a formal deductive description of individual conscience still shows the Kantian approach.

The point of view that sees inclination as mainly restricted by obligation may also be found in such recent and important writers as G. E. Moore and Anders Nygren. Moore has tried to demonstrate that ethical language can never be defined wholly in terms of observable fact. To do so is to commit the "naturalistic fallacy." In a study fundamental to any understanding of the linguistic analysis of ethical language, Moore argues that ethical terms have a meaning peculiarly their own, apart from all empirical considerations.[1] Nygren's classic study of agape and eros makes the point that God's love is of a totally different order from human love.[2] It is spontaneous and self-giving, while human love is responsive and self-seeking.

These few examples will perhaps suggest the variety of forms taken on by the Kantian description of obligation in the contemporary world.

2. *Obligation Grounded in, and Expressive of, Inclination*

A radically different approach finds the freedom of man not in intrinsic necessities of obligation, but in the rational ordering of inclinations and desires. Ethical language is basically a way of expressing human interests.

John Stuart Mill thought it quite evident that pain and pleasure are fundamental motives of human life. Along with them is found an inclination in man toward social living. Few if any sane human beings will choose to live in isolation. Sensible men recognize that the interest of all is the interest of each. Responsibility carries no implicit duties other than a reasonably objective assessment of human motives, and the fostering of general human interests in cooperation with others.

Freud is quite close to Mill in his description of the formation of conscience by early experiences of awe, reverence, and restriction in the

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[1] G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1956), pp. 5–20.

[2] *Agape and Eros* (London: S.P.C.K., 1954).

life of the child, working through successive stages now familiar to psychiatry. He also hoped for a rational analysis of human motives, a project to which most of his life was dedicated. He was, however, a good deal more pessimistic than Mill regarding man's ability to make rational decisions. Reason itself is a frail craft tossed about on the sea of human passion. A particularly heavy sense of duty is something irrationally and irresponsibly embedded in personality before the young person is even conscious of what he is feeling. Later, only the most sustained therapy can relieve it. But desire, on the other hand, Freud was convinced also originates in regions much deeper than the conscious level of the mind. It is correspondingly more difficult to appraise or systematize than it appeared in Mill's day.

Freud, though a highly individual pioneer, combines elements found in both Utilitarianism and Romanticism. The Romantics, as for instance Schleiermacher, stressed the idea that genuine obligation must be grounded in human feeling. Only when it is united with the "feeling of absolute dependence" is it authentic. Modern heirs of the Romantics, called "emotivists," stress the emotional character of all ethical language. Charles Stevenson believes that moral statements can be reduced to the form: "I approve of this; do so as well.[3] Utilitarians, Romantics, and emotivists each in their way insist that genuine sense of obligation arises out of inclination, and expresses it.

3. *Obligation and Inclination Paradoxically Related in Faith*

A third type of relation between freedom and duty is that expressed by Kierkegaard. Here human freedom lies precisely in the paradoxical juncture between the universality of all obligation and the individuality of all interest, passion, and concern. Freedom is realized in accepting the paradox and striving toward individuality rather than the universal. The Kantian analysis of obligation is partially accepted, but the ambiguity of our duty as we experience it is emphasized more than its all-inclusive requirements.

Freedom is a paradoxical, indirectly realized condition in which obligation is both affirmed and contradicted. Only by universal obligation—only as a "knight of infinite resignation"—does one come to faith. Yet within the uniqueness of the particular moment, freedom may suspend

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[3] Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944). The first influential statement of this position in recent years, as noted earlier, is that of C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938). For a discussion of the significance of the emotivists during the twentieth century see chap. I of Henry D. Aiken's *Reason and Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952).

obligation in what Kierkegaard calls a "teleological suspension of the ethical." This paradox can never be rationally resolved.

Contemporary biblical studies have felt the influence of Kierkegaard chiefly through the work of Rudolf Bultmann. In the biblical faith, according to the latter, the Christian stands under moral law in such a way that he is both obligated and free of it. The paradox is not resolved since freedom and law both exist for the Christian.

Reinhold Niebuhr may also be mentioned as one who speaks of the paradoxical relation between inclination and obligation.[4] Every human act springs from very human inclinations and stands before exceedingly exalted obligations. In Kierkegaard, Bultmann, and Niebuhr that paradox is not—dare not be—resolved. The highly significant fact about this approach to ethics is that it breaks with any attempt to find an inclusive system of ethics, whether objective or subjective. Every expression of human freedom is paradoxical.

4. *Obligation and Inclination United Beyond Themselves*

In the fourth type of relationship between inclination and obligation, the apparent opposites are united beyond themselves. This position does not contain the sharply paradoxical elements present in Kierkegaard and other existentialists. It does, however, show Kierkegaard's influence in allowing a certain openness to all expressions of freedom. The emphasis is on an open rather than a closed approach, a partial rather than a total orientation. Duty and desire are at one in particular situations without determining whether or how they shall be related in the future. The oneness is not so much conceptually arrived at as discovered in a moving reality. Unity of life is *given* in the midst of the fragmentation of concrete existence. This unity is more something to be found and acted on than a state of things possible to project or describe beforehand. The stress is on being receptive to the time and place in which obligation unites with inclination, rather than on speculating about the possibility.

Several of the sources already quoted assume an ethical position very close to this fourth type. An important landmark of Troeltsch's career was his shift from a more or less Kantian starting point toward openness to the immediate contingencies of history. Paul Tillich's description of the *telos* moving through and transforming all inclinations is very Hegelian. Yet for Tillich, too, the *telos* is an individualizing rather than a universalizing reality. It is more truly characterized as self-giving agape than as respect for duty. The conscience is finally motivated by the gift of divine grace in the power of the moment (kairos). Here it becomes

[4] *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955) contains the most complete statement of Niebuhr's position.

clear that in many respects the major lines of Tillich's thought belong with the present type. He is, in fact, a "bridge" thinker between the metaphysical and postmetaphysical approaches to ethics. No attempt to push him into one camp or the other quite does justice to his position.

Bonhoeffer and Barth also represent the thrust toward a postmetaphysical approach to freedom. For them it becomes actual through a particular history, in a particular context. Time and again, inclination and obligation unite in a given reality whose nature cannot be understood except by the historical events through which it discloses itself. Finally, freedom is a gift of God's election received in faith and visible in the historical faith-fact of Jesus of Nazareth.

The school of linguistic analysis has given various expositions of ethics, with affinities for one or another of the four types outlined above. This is done from an underlying assumption that the various uses of ethical terms arise from the changing stream of common language. Whitehead's and Russell's attempts to manufacture a proper ethical language have been abandoned.[5] Many linguistic analysts, as we noted earlier, see their task as that of a midwife facilitating the birth of new truth by helping to clarify the meaning of ordinary speech. Such an approach is very much in keeping with our fourth type.

In conclusion one may say that the dominant thrust of ethical thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is away from any easy identification of either inclination or obligation with human freedom. It is rather toward an open understanding—unprejudiced, objective, unsystematized—of a relation that is given rather than speculated about, historical rather than metaphysical. This relation is recognized more by its powerful presence than by its logical possibility. The tendency is to take hold of the self-giving, individualizing reality of freedom as it comes, rather than to attempt to formulate it in terms that are self-asserting, systematized, or universal.

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[5] Contemporary language analysis has rejected Bertrand Russell's view that "ordinary language is a crude repository of outworn metaphysics which cannot be trusted for the clear articulation and communication of ideas." Aiken, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 f.

Chapter Eleven

FAITH AND FREEDOM: THE DEVELOPING STORY

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

Conceptions of human freedom always spring from the wider cultural situation of the times and are responsive to it. The reader cannot fully appreciate the ideas set forth in our story without a certain awareness of the conditions to which they were being addressed. Human thought is a living process, intimately related to circumstances. It may help here to mention briefly some of the events around which the faith-freedom story has developed.

Writing in the eighteenth century, Kant was much affected by the growing capacity of the physical sciences to reinterpret the whole natural order. The new philosophy of science, especially as voiced by David Hume, challenged the entire structure of traditional morality. This was because it viewed human responsibility as something merely arbitrary, involved through age-old custom. Kant tried to locate the roots of human obligation in personality, where it could not be dislodged by the physical scientist.

Of equal force were the unsettling political events that culminated in the French Revolution. Sympathetic with the hopes and aspirations of the French, Kant defined freedom as the exercise of a voluntary and practical capacity. But his fear of the unruliness of French politics made him set a high value upon universal duties.

John Stuart Mill wrote in a different situation. His fellow Englishmen had developed a confidence in their own power to challenge political institutions in an orderly way. The growth of the British Empire and his own practical experience in the East India Company supported his belief that basic human interests may be shaped along reasonable lines. At the same time, the Utilitarianism he espoused was an attack on the social injustices suffered by the poor of that day. Genuine human freedom, he felt, must deal with inequities to all men—not just the inconveniences of the privileged classes. He was too early to sense the deep resentments of colonialism.

Kierkegaard was among the few brilliant thinkers of the nineteenth century who could foresee that an easy acceptance of things as they are might lead to totalitarianism and the oppression of the individual. Tragedies in his family and personal life joined with his theological acumen to give his writings a deep sense of loss. He seemed to have almost clairvoyant knowledge of the twentieth century, with its ideological conflicts, its instruments of total destruction, and its oppression and killing of vast numbers of people. A lonely voice in his time, he called for a new kind of individual responsibility.

Ernst Troeltsch lived in a period when twentieth-century trends were just becoming visible. Marx was having a dramatic influence on European affairs. The struggles that ended in the First World War marked the height of his career. His first object was to jolt Christianity out of its lack of concern for the great social problems of the world. He was convinced that the direction of the future of mankind depended upon active participation by men of good will. With Kierkegaard, he saw the importance of individual decision and risk, but also knew that responsiblity must develop in the midst of the institutional forces that shape human destiny.

A very different person, Sigmund Freud was influenced by the same cultural forces that played upon Troeltsch. He was more impressed, however, by the helplessness of Victorian morality. It seemed unable to cope with new evolutionary views of human development and historical conceptions of man. He found that mental illness—so awesome to mankind in every age—is often related to the very rules by which men are convinced they must live. Freud's was an epoch-making attempt to understand freedom in a way that would reduce human suffering rather than increase it.

Paul Tillich lived "between the times"—or, as he liked to put it, "on the boundary." He was appreciative of the nineteenth century but deeply involved in the twentieth. A chaplain during World War I, he took an active part in the religious socialist movement in Germany after the war. Because of his criticisms under Hitler, he found it necessary to flee to America. Here he was especially drawn to the psychiatric movement—one evidence of his consuming interest in developing a theology of culture. His view of freedom reflects the successive conflicts of the twentieth century, but gives powerful expression to the hope that has marked two thousand years of Christian faith.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis gave men increased respect for what he had to say. He insisted on the importance of an open confession of Jesus Christ in the face of attempts to control men's thinking. At the same time, he had great respect for the way freedom takes communal form. Like Tillich, he saw clearly how ambiguity in-

trudes into human decisions of all kinds. His sense of responsibility reflects the suffering that shrouded his own life. Even in prison, he was critical of the way faith becomes isolated from the everyday lives of men. His cryptic suggestions of a kind of faith that moves freely within its secular responsibility has sparked a whole new direction in contemporary theology.

The influence of these men and others like them makes it clear that the freedom of faith can no longer be understood in purely static terms. It cannot isolate itself from the political, social, and personal changes that occur in every age. An adequate view of the freedom of faith must be in touch with events of the past that have shaped the present. But it must also, and especially, be open to the conditions and events that lead toward the future.

FREEDOM AND THE QUEST FOR A UNIVERSAL MORALITY

It is clear that the freedom of men of faith may be conceived in various ways. Several options are developing in contemporary thought. Our story has been interwoven with changing conceptions of faith, of the nature of man, and of ways of knowing. But how does freedom retain its universal validity for man and yet meet the concrete realities of everyday life? The impetus of our story has derived from pressure to protect the universality of ethics while maintaining a responsible openness to changing times.

Through a long history the Western world has evolved an ethical position that rests upon respect for personality and faith in the moral structure of life. From Plato and Aristotle on, these ideas have developed as moral law. The early Christian Fathers combined them theologically with the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Despite their differences, both Kant and Mill assume the universal validity of moral structures in life.

But easy acceptance of a universal morality cannot stand before Kierkegaard's penetrating analysis. He does not question morality itself. Rather, he challenges the reader to consider whether any person in any given set of circumstances can act with full assurance of the rightness of his deed. The finite nature of man does not permit universal understanding. Moral liberty, then, like faith itself, is a passionate act of risk. From Kierkegaard on, it becomes increasingly clear that human freedom is always subject to temporal and circumstantial limits. It springs from what has occurred in the past, and is expressed only by cutting off certain future possibilities in favor of others. Thus concrete acts of freedom in their particular historical context are more important than abstract ideas about it.

Troeltsch spent his whole career trying to show that genuine respect for personality cannot be realized without responsible involvement in the myriad social commitments that make up the fabric of society. Otherwise life becomes chaotic. Freud demonstrated that personal freedom is often crippled by destructive moral impulses within the personality. Health becomes possible with the sympathetic recovery, in the patient's mind, of the circumstances in which repression and compulsion developed.

In their different ways, Tillich and Bonhoeffer also acknowledge the historical context of freedom. Tillich insists that every attempt to express universal morality is at best fragmentary. Only the love of God (agape) in the living moment (kairos) can give any particular human decision moral depth and power.

According to Bonhoeffer, man must act in the realization that the Spirit of Christ is shaping humanity. This means that he is called to responsible engagement with those around him, even though he becomes involved in the problems and guilt of his neighbor. Here is the full swing away from any attempt to imagine that one is acting universally. The freedom of faith joins men together in very particular acts of mutual responsibility.

Thus we see how the modern world is searching for more adequate descriptions of human freedom—a sufficient basis for human responsibility. Arguments can be made for the view that mutual obligation is one of the basic conditions of human existence, and that freedom itself presupposes respect for personality. Whatever the shifts in contemporary thinking, movements of all kinds—political parties, civil rights groups, religious denominations—continue to base their thinking upon the inviolablity of the personality. Respect for the person, for moral law, seems to be part of the very fabric of human experience.

On the other hand, arguments can also be made for the idea that interest in the mutual good must be nourished from more fundamental—perhaps more animal—drives and emotions. There is ample evidence in this generation that men can torture and slaughter their fellows with little or no apparent qualm of conscience. Morality may even become so oppressive to some as to distort their rational processes. Any adequate view of human freedom must account for these deep-seated human inclinations and drives.

Some in our story have stressed the ambiguity of all obligation. They have been less concerned for general morality than for genuine and courageous decision. For them freedom cannot be simply reasonable self-interest, no matter how enlightened, nor even the product of sympathetic motivation. Certainly it cannot be submission to exalted authority. Freedom is decision in the face of uncertainties. It is the courage to care, when virtue cannot be proven. It is an act of faith, perhaps even a will-

ingness to take guilt upon oneself when self-concerned innocence would not dare.

And freedom itself? It comes down to us in many facets and forms, elusively twinkling like a diamond. Permission (free room to move or act in), obligation (what we ought to do, or not do), inclination (what we want), will (drive or purpose), faith (the root of spiritual courage)—as we have seen, all have their bearing. It is probably true to say that the greatest freedom comes where deepest desire is at one with the greatest sense of obligation and the liveliest, keenest faith.

For serious Christians this point occurs in the most complete and unreserved dedication to Christ and fearless obedience to what that teaches, both as a steady horizon of life and in the critical moment. Oddly enough, this depth of freedom seems unaffected by outward hindrance. It will die on the barricades if necessary—or in the jails or under shotgun fire—still profoundly free. And through all, it acts not arbitrarily but in response to genuine human need.

Perhaps the freedom of faith is taking on more life, color, and vitality in our day. The very revolt against formalism often signalizes a larger responsiveness to one's fellow man. Thus, though Freud was an agnostic, his sympathy for emotional pain and his passion for truth have opened avenues for very concrete twentieth-century experience of the compassion of Christ. Behind the work of Troeltsch, Freud, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer was in every case a deep hope for a new internationalism that would help resolve the desperate political turmoil of our times. Freedom can no longer be satisfied in easy tradition or vapid rationalizing. It must rise afresh in the lives of men and women as they take their place in society.

CURRENT TRENDS: 1. NATURAL LAW

While we cannot survey current tendencies in great detail, we may examine three that are representative to show how the issues raised in the past century are being debated today.

Natural law has been traditionally understood as referring to whatever immutable structures may govern and give shape to human moral behavior. It has served in the past as a basis for reasoning by which general moral considerations are related to particular cases. Problems of politics, business, and personal decision alike can, in this view, be solved by reference to universal moral standards. The latter are considered to have been established biblically in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, and also by human reason in what is popularly called common sense. There have been many exponents of the natural law, but Plato, Aquinas, and Kant are three of the greatest.

Kant's revolutionary approach did not change the content of this doctrine. He merely understood moral law to operate inwardly, in the conscience, rather than in some objective realm. His reasoning is based on the finality of self-respect as a motive, and on the universality of moral claims. Persons must never be treated as means, but only as ends. Every man is to respect his own personhood. These are the principles by which individual cases may be decided. For example, if I face a burglar who demands information for his own purposes, I must nevertheless act in such a way as will not violate the truth. Our survey has shown how this approach is brought into serious question by Kierkegaard, Freud, Troeltsch, and Bonhoeffer among others.

The question now becomes whether the natural-law tradition can be redefined so that it is no longer based on static metaphysical presuppositions. John Bennett has made one such attempt with his concept of the "middle axiom."[1] He admits the gap between the ultimate Christian demand for love and the details of particular situations. His solution is the formulation of principles which are less final and total than the admonition to love, but clearly larger in scope than any one set of circumstances.

The New Testament requirement to love the neighbor becomes more concrete when it is specified in the form of a middle axiom. "The poor in every nation are the responsibility of those persons and groups who have economic power." Such a statement does not tie itself to any one theory of economics, but does voice a concern that Christians cannot ignore in our day. Middle axioms are thus drawn from the principle of Christian love to give guidance in particular cases. But they acknowledge the uniqueness of all human decisions.

Paul Ramsey is another proponent of the natural-law position. He argues that the Church's use of this doctrine has always been expressed in moral consideration of what would otherwise be judged outside the field of moral standards. Thus the Church's "just-war" theory was for the purpose of modifying actual wars in the direction of love for the neighbor. The task today is to revitalize whatever natural-law distinctions may serve to bring moral awareness into contemporary international disputes. Ramsey suggests that the difference between combatant and noncombatant is sufficiently clear so that the latter should be excluded from military targets for moral reasons.[2]

Thus natural law and/or the middle axiom can be redefined so as to take account of historical change—that is, they are seen in a given context rather than as abstract obligations. In this form they pose an attrac-

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[1] See chap. V. of Paul Lehmann's *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

[2] Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1961).

tive option for responsible freedom. If such axioms reflect a careful knowledge of particular facts, they must certainly be taken seriously. The law then becomes a kind of summary of past change, to be taken into account in all present activity.

But one wonders whether the effort to redefine law does not carry a notion of obligation already too static to operate appropriately in an era of radical change. One may easily forget that the law is not itself the freedom of faith. The genuinely ethical performance takes place where activity is open to changing circumstance in relation to its central orientation in Jesus Christ. Whether current efforts to retool natural-law doctrine will be successful is not yet clear. So long as they are made in terms responsibly open to secular culture, they cannot be ignored.

CURRENT TRENDS: 2. PSYCHIATRY AND ETHICS

To include Freud in an account of the shaping of modern Christian thought may seem at first glance an anomaly, especially in view of his avowed atheism. Many have accused him of overturning the morality of our day. However, a thoughtful interpreter can hardly lay blame for the current revolution at Freud's feet alone. His work is part of the much larger story of modern man's attempt to find freedom. Nor can one deny the scope of his influence on the Christian understanding of the latter.

Far from being a simple repudiation of ethics, a good case can be made for an interpretation of Freud's work as involving basic moral commitments. Among these are a profound sympathy for those who suffer emotional pain and an undeviating confidence in the healing power of truth. The fundamental "rule" of his therapeutic procedure was a willingness to express (i.e., be truthful about) all impulses that come to consciousness, no matter how vulgar or unacceptable. He was convinced that healing comes when the whole self, including the ultimate depths of emotion, is open and honest rather than repressive.

This raises the question of whether one can be genuinely healed by the expression of feelings. O. Hobart Mowrer is an accomplished psychologist who believes that neurosis is usually caused by failure to confess actual moral guilt. He is experimenting with group therapy based upon this insight.[3] His work seems strikingly close to the Kantian conception of guilt. It proves that some of the options listed in our last chapter are still very much alive in the field of psychology.

Many followers of Freud find in his work clues for a psychiatric approach to responsibility. Erik Erikson believes his writings show a clear

[3] See O. Hobart Mowrer, *The New Group Therapy* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand Press, 1964) and *The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand Press. 1964).

trend away from unconscious factors in the personality toward conscious "ego functions," especially in the larger context of cultural history.[4] Erikson elaborates this view by describing the various qualities that make up ego strength. These are the basis for a list of fundamental virtues: hope, will, purpose, and competence in childhood; fidelity in adolescence; and love, care, and wisdom in adulthood. Each matures during an appropriate life stage.

Freud's views, of course, gave rise to a plethora of interpretations, some truer to the original than others. Psychiatry takes various approaches to faith and freedom. But one thing is clear: his followers today are working out a description of responsibility with which theology must be in dialog.

CURRENT TRENDS: 3. THE NEW MORALITY

Another issue around which much debate revolves is that of the "new morality." It is variously designated as "situational" or "contextual" ethics, and is in many ways the reverse of a natural-law approach.[5] The basic point at issue is whether the situation, or context, may not in some way have priority over the traditional moral imperatives that are brought to it. In Kierkegaard's terminology, the question is whether the situation does not in some instances suspend the ethical, or at least call it into question. Another way of putting it is to ask whether the presence of radical change at the center of history does not unsettle every attempt to extend the static continuities of the past into the present. Is there any way of understanding a "divine imperative" that is radically open to change—yet does not lose the imperative?

Paul Lehmann argues for a contextual approach that has at least three dimensions.[6] The *koinonia,* or community of faith, is the "socioethical" reality within which decision is made. Lehmann means by this that every decision is completely and totally interpersonal, to the core. His analysis depends on such studies as Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Communio Sanctorum.* A second context is the political character of what "God is doing in the world." The biblical account is interpreted in terms of the politics of Israel. This understanding of politics becomes the key to understanding and responding to divine activity on the contemporary scene. The third context is that of Jesus Christ, who is both the sign and the reality of

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[4] Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: International Universities Press, 1959) and *Insight and Responsibility* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1964).

[5] The most definitive statement so far is by Paul Lehmann, *op. cit.* A more popular presentation may be found in Bishop John A. T. Robinson's *Christian Morals Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964).

[6] See James Gustafson's article, "Context or Principle: A Misplaced Debate in Christian Ethics," *Harvard Theological Review* (April 1965).

what genuine humanity is. Lehmann clearly intends that the "three contexts" be understood as three perspectives on a fundamental unity.

This analysis is a creative and sophisticated attempt to take radical change into the very center of moral decisions. Lehmann's focus upon politics and humanization as decisive terms for interpreting Christian ethics is an effort to show how the freedom of faith involves openness to secular culture. The problem of his analysis comes from the lack of illustrations for it. Only when his approach goes deeper, into the complexities of actual situations, will we be able to see just how helpful his reformulations are.

In the article cited on page 303, n. 6, Gustafson insists that in ethical decisions there must be something like principle, or our respect for the cultural context turns into action by mere impulse. He distinguishes between "commanding" and "illuminating" principles. The latter are for reference in the midst of change. The distinction seems quite close to Tillich's commanding law and structural law. But again it is not clear whether Gustafson's position is a solution or simply a restatement of the problem.

One of the most promising approaches is that of Henry David Aiken, who calls for a functional analysis of the use of moral language.[7] He criticizes any approach involving moral language intended to be used in the same way at all times. Moral decision should be guided by a careful awareness of the various functions that moral language has served in the past. It can thus be used with a higher degree of freedom in new situations. Aiken's point of view demands careful attention to the ways in which the language of law has been used, rather than a priori decisions about application of the law itself.

What seems increasingly clear from these various discussions is that proponents of the "new morality," though dealing with concepts of moral obligation oriented toward the radical changes of history, cannot easily dismiss the language of principle. Yet no one seems to have been wholly successful in the task of bridging this gap.

A FORWARD LOOK: THE NEW SHAPE OF FREEDOM

The faith-freedom story moves tellingly toward the view that man finds his freedom as he adopts a stance of responsible openness to changing history. The impetus of our selections has been to show how the fact of Jesus Christ releases the man of faith to deal with the moment in which he is involved. This freedom joins man in a community of concern for the welfare of others, established by the continuing power of Christ.

Our effort here to outline the new shape of freedom is not meant to

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[7] See his *Reason and Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

suggest that we have gained a vantage point above history itself. Indeed, our own view is very much part of the ongoing story. It suggests a shift that is occurring even now in the contemporary understanding of freedom. The pressing question today is how the fact of Jesus Christ can so orient the response of faith that its accompanying freedom will function in the midst of everyday events and affairs. This shift is not to be seen as a total break with earlier understanding of the freedom found in Christ. Rather, it probes for a way in which freedom can be faithful in the technological and urban society whose marks are becoming so very pervasive nowadays.

How does the new shape of freedom gather up elements of the story already recounted, or suggested in current trends? With Kant we understand that moral obligation is a kind of "call" heard at the center of human consciousness. In responding to this call man is to act without being dominated by personal impulses or desires, or by external pressures of any kind. Responsible openness to God and to neighbor must be without instinctual bias from inner compulsions. One's own interests become available to the interests of the neighbor.

But we must be clearer than Kant that responsible openness is always vitally conditioned by the changing historical situation. It is not a question of moving into the stream of events by means of a rational moral archetype and timeless moral law. "Openness" is not some sort of timeless personal quality surrounded by alien circumstances. On the contrary, it is a *relatedness* in which the self and surrounding conditions interpenetrate. Language about responsibility cannot be totally converted into other kinds of statement. But we err in trying to maintain a duty-language so separate and complete as to stand above historical change. Any language about duty must be constantly reworked if it is to remain open to changes in common meaning and use.

Our new shape of freedom also takes positive direction from the thought of Mill. We must be critical of any artificial gulf between inclination and obligation. *Only when man's inclinations are ordered and directed by a larger sense of obligation is he genuinely free.* Responsible openness is the spontaneous expression of a basic sentiment of concern for the neighbor. But even more than Mill, we recognize the extent to which the basic inclination toward sympathy and unity with one's fellow men is shaped by conditions. Feelings of solidarity between people are largely an expression of the cultural ethos and the movement of history. They come from sharing in a community where social awareness has somehow been stimulated. The freedom of faith, among other things, is commitment to the larger welfare of mankind within the changing forms of inclination and obligation.

Kierkegaard calls for the decision to be an individual in the midst of

change, rather than reaching for unchanging verities. If he means the acceptance of responsibility as it takes shape historically, while maintaining a courageous openness to the new possibilities that constantly offer themselves, we move with him. However, we reject any interpretation that lifts the individual out of his own history. We do not believe in the backhanded kind of certainty of faith that comes paradoxically in facing uncertainty. Responsible openness of faith finds its identity in relation to the fact of Christ. This, in its earthly reality, gives man confidence to expect new possibilities within his changing everyday experience.

Our view of the new shape of freedom also catches up insights from Freud and his description of the deterioration of personality. Conscience turns into a vicious circle when it is not open to new possibilities. Obligation that represents open commitment rather than compulsion has the greater freedom to act. So far, Freud is a helpful guide. Yet we cannot allow preoccupation with pathological factors to obscure the importance of ego ideals. This has been recently emphasized by psychoanalysts.[8] The person who is open to reality, who assumes responsibility for himself and his actions in the face of change, is free from pathological domination out of his past. He is free for a healthy conscientiousness in all his responses.

With Troeltsch no less than Freud in our background, we see that personality itself is fully historical, always embedded in its cultural setting. Only a person who is responsibly open to the larger institutional structures of society—family, economics, government, education—can be genuinely free. This means that man has a role to play in the shaping of his cultural history. Such responsibility does not come about abstractly, through general concepts of personality as Troeltsch sometimes suggested. It is to be found, rather, in the midst of everyday existence, among particular persons and events. And it is shaped by the continuing power and purpose that bears the name of Christ.

The ambiguity of obligation is picked up in Tillich's analysis. He shows quite clearly how duty and conscience are historically shaped. Yet he realizes that responsible freedom is open to the changes in human existence that make every decision essentially a new one. Grace is the power that conquers the flaw, the gap, between a man's inadequate motivation and the basic obligation of his life. Love—agape—expresses the ethical wisdom of the past and at the same time meets every new situation. In this sense it is beyond law. Hence Tillich can speak of a transmoral conscience that suffers the guilt of past expectations in order to be open to the present. Tillich's understanding of love (or agape) is very close to what we mean by responsible openness within radical temporality. Openness is both a gift of grace and a total act of the person.

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[8] See, for example, Erikson, *Insight and Responsibility.*

But while Tillich carefully analyzes the relation between moral continuity and change, he makes only abstract reference to the symbol of the cross in which that relation is most visible. He does not show clearly how openness is shaped and responsibly directed in concrete relation to Christ. Here Bonhoeffer is especially helpful. The event of Christ in the everyday, factual world both orients men to past expectations and opens them to the future. In Christ man is responsive to his neighbor to the point of enduring guilt or perhaps even death in that act of obedience. In Christ man is open to his obligations, but not imprisoned by them. For he is sensitive to the way obligation is set within a changing historical context.

We want to make very clear that this evolution in the understanding of human freedom does not end with Bonhoeffer. The event of Jesus Christ is the impetus for every attempt, pushing toward new formulations within the process of social change. Shortly before his execution Bonhoeffer sounded the keynote of what is becoming a dominant direction in the reinterpretation of ethics. He suggested that if freedom is the kind of relatedness that creates openness of people toward each other, then men of faith must be aware of the ways in which the secular world can inform faith itself. The relation between sacred and secular can no longer be a static touching of two separate spheres. Responsibility within change means that freedom transcends the limits of the currently sacred and moral. Openness to change can only mean sifting the possibilities being born in secular culture.

This chapter has indicated how drastically the language of obligation is exposed to historical change. Men cannot use detached systems of thought to justify their behavior. The freedom of faith is very much related to its past, but as a kind of running conversation among changing interpretations. No doubt Bonhoeffer marks a turn in the tide. The new trend will be to discover the ways in which freedom in Christ is related to every dimension of present and future. The significance of the Christ-event to all history and all men calls for responsible freedom to show its relation to the manifold cultural developments of the day. To discern the meaning of this freedom in the midst of the revolutionary movements of our time will be the primary task of ethics for the present generation.

PART III

FAITH AND TRUTH

Chapter Twelve

THE NATURE OF TRUTH

We turn now to *truth* as the focus of our exploration. The question of what constitutes truth, or reality, has of course already been in some sense implied in the discussion of history and freedom. But we now come to the point of asking directly: What is the truth of faith? How do we know truth? How does man know Christ, or God? How does the faith *subject* really know the *object* of faith? And what is the relation of this kind of truth to more ordinary objects and truth claims? In the Introduction to this volume, on pp. 17–19, we did glance at this theme in some of its successive forms. Before elaborating the faith-truth story in detail, we must take another brief look at its historical development. It will be useful, for instance, to see how the question of truth came to be posed in terms of a subject-object relationship at all. For this points to the kind of reformulation now going on in Christian thought.

When we find in Jesus of Nazareth the object of our faith, questions of historical fact intermingle with broader philosophic and theological truth. Thus the "subject-object" discussion before us may be viewed as an extension—though somewhat more abstract—of the faith-fact story. We shall also be taking for granted our analysis in Part II of man's sense of obligation and the ways in which it combines with his inclinations to create human freedom. The interrelation of these facets of experience might be stated as follows: Where freedom breaks out, or is experienced in human life—where what we ought to do for the sake of the larger social value coincides with what we want to do—there for the moment we know the truth that sets us free. And there we are truly aligned with the factual state of affairs so far as we are able to perceive it.

Though it will not be fully clear until later in the discussion, a brief projection of our line of inquiry in Part III may be helpful as we move through the major variations of response to our basic question. This is: how the subject of faith (the person who holds it) and the object of faith (what or Whom he has faith in) are related to each other, and to the everyday things and relationships for which we also make claims of truth.

Once more the backdrop for our story is the medieval understanding of the issue. And again (without claiming an exaggerated unanimity of thought for that long and varied period) we are justified in saying that in the Middle Ages the term "true" was considered to mean: consistent with the teachings of authority. That is, something that conformed to what was thought of as a total order of being. This involved truths of revelation as interpreted by an authoritative Church; and also truths of reason, as reason is "instructed" by reality itself. All was integrated in the type of synthesis of which Thomas Aquinas has set forth the classic expression.

Aristotle assumed that there existed a "community of forms" between the human mind and the things it knows. By this tradition the subject, or mind of the observer, is "conformed" to the object or thing observed, through both the "natural light of reason" and supernatural revelation. Implied here is a partnership between ordinary rational truth, to which the intellect has access, and revealed truths. The weakness and incompleteness of the human mind make it necessary for man to receive some truths by other means than the exercise of his own intelligence. According to this way of thinking, the truth of faith stands in orderly relation to the truth of reason. The realization and acceptance of a thing as true—the validation of it—may occur in terms of both rationally acceptable evidence and/or supernatural revelation.

CARTESIANISM AND POST-CARTESIANISM

The great awakening of the Renaissance broke up the Middle Ages. Many of the tendencies toward secularization now so widely taken for granted were first brought into the open at this time. A pervasive cultural shift began in what could be "felt" as truth.[1] "Efficient" rather than ultimate causes began to claim attention—questions of immediate cause and effect rather than metaphysical purpose and design. "Truth" gradually came to be understood as the aspect of things that can be expressed in quantity, and thus in a way "controlled." (One handled however much was convenient.)

Physical verification is possible only where things can be appraised by the senses, or in the end by mechanical substitutes for them: instruments of all kinds. Thus a scrupulous adherence to external, factual truth means, to some extent, that truth can be known only about things that can be handled and controlled. Here the subject, or observing mind, stands away from the object, or thing observed, in the process of knowing and strives to manipulate and arrange what is to be known. Validation is by hard fact that can be accurately expressed in terms of measurement.

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[1] See Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth-Century Background* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1955), chap. I.

The break with the medieval "scale of being," in which the individual is integrated into a metaphysical totality,[2] tended to make a more and more self-contained world out of the human ego. The self in direct relation to the external world, as we had it in the Middle Ages, was replaced by a self marked off from the world. Like Lessing and Kant, René Descartes stands at a crucial point in cultural history. He was the voice for a new stage in the development of society. So far as the topic at hand is concerned, what he bequeathed to Western civilization was a view of the *subject* as having direct knowledge only of his own ideas. These then have to be related to the object by a secondary act—of verification, so to speak. Man's relation to truth was thus posed in subject-object terms, with a separation between them and the implied problem of bridging it. We shall see presently some of the thrusts and counterthrusts of thought that followed.

In a manner of speaking, of course, all conscious knowing involves a distinctinon between subject and object, the knower and the known.[3] But there is a great difference between a fundamental unity—one world, so to speak—within which sundry distinctions arise, and an essential separation or gulf between the self and the world. In this respect we may speak of modern times as fundamentally *post*-Cartesian in temper. For the Cartesian "ego," solitary and worldness, is replaced for us by a self we know to be interpenetrated by its social context. In its most basic identity it is unable to leave behind influences of childhood, social environment, and the intimate legacies of history. The very reality of these influences is proof of the individual's world orientation. The self is marked by givenness of conditions and openness to impact, and we know it.

being-in-the-world

Martin Heidegger is a twentieth-century philosopher who clearly expresses this increasingly pervasive cultural recognition. He is perhaps to our century what Descartes was to his, and in that capacity breaks sharply with the Cartesian assumptions.[4] For Heidegger the starting point

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[2] Cf. Aquinas' view of man as fitting into a hierarchy of angelic beings (disembodied rational souls), human beings (rational souls conjoined with a body), and animal beings (embodied souls lacking rationality).

[3] See Gordon D. Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), for a helpful analysis of the way in which the subject-object differentiation emerges in the development of consciousness. He argues both that this is the fundamental polarity out of which all sophisticated knowledge arises, and that it is itself an abstraction grounded in a more basic experience of wholeness (*Erlebnis*).

[4] Even more sharply than his predecessor, Eduard Husserl. The latter was an important German philosopher (1859–1938) who foreshadowed the work of Heidegger. He helped to found modern phenomenology, with his turn to "the things themselves" and his readiness to "bracket" more speculative considerations. Beginning with emphasis upon the conscious subject, he broke from the Cartesian view of the self—a step Heidegger was to carry even further.

is Being rather than human consciousness. Here is where primal thinking occurs. Here the subject waits upon the object rather than manipulating it. Here the question of truth is focused at the very root of the subject-object split. Validation involves the unveiling of mystery from the depths of Being itself.[5]

Going a step further in this bird's-eye view of our inquiry, it is not too much to say that Karl Barth has also stamped modern Christian thought with post-Cartesian tendencies and form.[6] In him we find striking affinities with Heidegger's style of thinking, in spite of serious differences. For Barth the starting point for truth, for reality, is Jesus Christ—not human consciousness and not Being as such. The human *subject* does not come to knowledge through manipulation, by inventing categories and fitting the world outside himself into a system of his own. On the contrary, he knows—in the realm of faith—only through *being known* by the *Object* of faith, who is thus actually the *Subject* in the relationship. Man also knows through obedience to this *Object-Subject*—a case of "doing" the truth. Realization, or validation, comes in terms of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. This to such effect that all other (alien or neutral) points of view are anachronistic, irrelevant. God is known through God alone. That is, through his very specific revelation in Jesus, as believed and confessed in Scripture and the community of faith.

For Barth, priority has shifted from the faith-subject to the faith-Object-Subject, and from man's manipulation and control to his need for receptivity. In this Barth represents another crucial point in the faith-truth development. It is an important clue to just how modern Christian thought is shifting in still other ways in the contemporary context. For the story does not end with Barth. It may be that a still more radical post-Cartesianism is demanded of us nowadays. Perhaps we need even greater openness, in our faith thinking, acting, and speaking, to the world and to ordinary truth claims and procedures. What seems to be required is a more rigorous examination of just where and how the truth of faith enters into our culture, so increasingly functional in style. Modern secularization of life continues at such a pace as to raise some doubt of the usefulness to this generation of either Heidegger's premetaphysical or Barth's Christological positivism.

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[5] See pp. 464–465 below for the way in which this shift in philosophical climate has given impetus and direction to the current interest in the question of a "new hermeneutic."

[6] For a perceptive article on Barth's importance in this regard, although the merits of the case are still being hotly debated, see Robert Cushman, "Barth's Attack upon Cartesianism and the Future of Theology," *Journal of Religion* (October 1956), pp. 207–225. Also highly useful for insights into Barth's contribution to the current discussion of theological method against the nineteenth-century background is Hans Frei's contribution in Paul Ramsey, ed., *Faith and Ethics* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), especially pp. 32–53.

The foregoing is obviously a very brief and compressed review. The reader, moreover, may find the specialized language somewhat removed from current thought and speech. But in the following account and later comments, what has been barely outlined here will, we hope, become clear in its historical context. The reader will want to give careful attention, meanwhile, to the differences of language and usage involved in the various possible ways of understanding how faith relates to truth.

Chapter Thirteen

THE FAITH-TRUTH STORY

Coming now to the faith-truth issue at closer range, our aim is to show how the various attitudes or recognized possibilities in modern Christian thinking on this topic have taken shape. Again it may be helpful to begin by alerting ourselves, as in earlier sections, to the meaning of the word we are dealing with. It is not a question of pinning down any preferred definition, or a strictly theological one. Rather, we must feel our way into the range of significance of the word as well as listening for some of its overtones.

How is it possible, for instance, for a book (such as this one) to have separate sections dealing with the "faith-fact" issue and the "faith-truth" issue? Is fact not truth? We certainly speak more or less commonly of its being "true" as opposed to "false."

Does *truth* consist only of ultimate things, such as we never know in this life? Or is it the visible world that we see and touch?

Is truth necessarily connected with knowing? There are those who believe nothing exists except in the minds of human beings. Could truth be totally separate from awareness? Or is human awareness like a screen for color wave lengths, able to perceive some things (in a perhaps one-sided way) and totally blank to a myriad of others? What would be the truth in that case: our partial vision or the totality we are mostly ignorant of?

Is truth the same as "reality"—whatever exists, large or small, visible or invisible? Obects and conditions such as anyone can see if he has eyes, or a microscope, a telescope, radar, litmus paper—or an array of much subtler extensions of the senses. Or is it principles, which one can never see except dressed up in some sort of mental costume? You can see five chairs, five cities, five stars, but you can never see fiveness. You can see an honest man, but not his honesty except in how he behaves. As for "Honesty is the best policy," we think it "true," but how would you put your finger on the truth of it?

Is truth only what we can measure? What is the truth of a dream, of an idea, of a stomach-ache?

Who can vouch for truth? Is it a matter of the highest authority? Or of the clearest, most vivid and immediate experience? Disallowing, of course, hallucinations and any other recognized abnormality. Is it a matter of logic and reasoning, arithmetic and geometry? Is irrefutable argument a proof of truth? How does one prove truth?

Can any part of truth contradict any other part? Is truth relative—if so, to what? Or is there somewhere an absolute truth? Can there be both? How would that work?

Is the truth what happened—is it fact? Can you describe what truly happened? How do you know? Can the onlooker tell—can the participant tell? What do we mean by "telling the truth"? How true is it? What is integrity?

What about emotional truth? —scientific truth? —artistic truth? —even musical truth? Oh, yes—not a joke, very real to musicians——

And through all this or beyond it, what is spiritual truth, the truth of faith? What is revelation? What is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth? What is inner certainty, or encounter? What is the truth that Christ *is*? What is meant when we are told to "*do*" the truth?

Such questions cannot be easily answered for the reader. It is up to him, as to every human being, what he will make of them. But we shall see in the following selections how Christian thought during the last two hundred years has dealt with one facet or another. And in the process perhaps we may come by sufficient orientation to clarify our thinking a little as to the contemporary scene.

1. Renè Descartes

1596-1650

French philosopher and scientist. Born in La Haye in Touraine, son of well-to-do provincial councillor. Frail child, brilliant at Jesuit school; also studied horsemanship, fencing. Graduated in law from University of Poitiers. Took "gentleman's" service in European wars, chiefly to travel and observe; later traveled independently. In 1619 at a German inn had mental revelation which changed his life, and began philosophical writing. Went to Paris, loved gambling, music, studied mathematics. At times lived secluded with scholar friends. In 1629 settled in Holland for life; lived in 13 places, usually near a university, changed residence 24 times. Devout Catholic. Compared "science" to a tree—metaphysics the root, physics the trunk, three main branches mathematics, medicine, morals. Like Churchill, did much of his work in bed. Many disciples, enemies, royal patrons. Pioneer in mathematics, physics, psychology. Twice attacked by Church, but protected by Prince of Orange. Accepted invitation from Queen Christina to Swedish court, where he died the next year.

"We may doubt that we have hands or feet; but we cannot doubt that we are doubting."

"I think, therefore I am."

"There is no question more important to solve than that of knowing what human knowledge is and how far it extends. . . . This is a question which ought to be asked at least once in their lives by all who seriously wish to gain wisdom."

This thinker, as we have noted above, was a pioneer in several fields. He began his philosophical reflections at a moment when old assumptions and patterns of thought were giving way to new. It was the time of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo. An exciting time, not a very safe time. Nearly everything previously accepted was being swept away in the winds of new discoveries. It had been assumed that the sun moved around the earth. Now it was suggested that the earth moves around the sun. The universe had been thought of as a living organism, oriented toward goals designed and directed by heavenly Providence. Now one had

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Descartes' chief philosophical works are the following: Discourse on Method *(1637),* Meditations on First Philosophy *(1641),* Principles of Philosophy *(1644), and* Rules for the Direction of the Understanding *(1701).*

to adjust to the idea of a universe something like a machine, subject to laws of motion and to precise measurements in terms of force and velocity.

It is not strange that Descartes found himself increasingly unsettled. Tradition and his senses told him one thing, but the creative voices of the age taught another. He complains: "I found myself embarrassed with so many doubts and errors that it seemed to me that the effort to instruct myself had no effect other than the increasing discovery of my own ignorance."[1]

How is one to distinguish between true and false, between adequate and inadequate knowledge? "Truth," Descartes pronounced, "requires a clear and distinct perception of its object, excluding all doubt." Caught in the shifting intellectual currents of his time, he found his search for truth leading him toward the model of "universal mathematics." His "rules" took the form of axioms: (1) Admit nothing as true unless it is so "clear and distinct" in the mind as to offer absolutely no reason to doubt it. (2) Divide each complex issue into its simplest components. (3) Move in turn from the simpler to the more complex. (4) Engage in constant checks and revisions so as to guard against omissions.[2]

But where does this system validate itself in human experience? Is there really any idea so "clear and distinct" to the knowing subject as to constitute an absolutely certain point of departure?

The answer was reached for Descartes through what became the celebrated process of procedural doubt. By systematically doubting all impressions delivered to us by our senses, even all rational demonstrations, one arrives at one undeniable fact. "We may doubt that we have hands or feet; but we cannot doubt that we are doubting." Thence the famous conclusion: "I think, therefore I am."[3] Here is an immediate, irrefutable intuition of truth that cuts behind sense impressions and lies at the bottom of all reasoning. On this bedrock certainty all else stands.

In connection with this famous pronouncement it may be well to note in passing what is seldom remembered: that Descartes said, "By the word thought I understand all that of which we are conscious as operating in us. And that is why not only understanding, willing, imagining, but also feeling are here the same thing as thought."[4]

For Descartes there is a correlative certainty. In the apprehension of the self one gains concurrently an "immediate" (as opposed to "adventitious" or "fictitious") idea of God. His description of this realization is less

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[1] René Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* Part I.

[2] *Ibid.,* Part II. For a more detailed elaboration see Descartes' *Rules for the Direction of the Mind.*

[3] For the justly renowned description of how this revolutionary insight came to Descartes, see the *Discourse on Method,* Part IV.

[4] "Descartes," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 1955 ed., Vol. 7, p. 248, col. 2.

clear to the contemporary reader than the realization he thus sets forth. Nevertheless, for him (along Augustinian lines) the infinite is thus apprehended in and with the finite, the perfect in and through what is dependent.[5] Although this corollary has been much debated, it seems likely that for Descartes it was less a syllogistic deduction than an apprehension —a "clear and distinct conception"—arrived at with intuitive certainty.

But let us explore a little our selection from his works. In his very first paragraph he sums up all he is willing to say he really *knows,* and then cautiously begins looking around to see whether there is anything further that he "did not know he knew." He is sure he thinks, in the larger sense noted above. Is this not enough to learn the truth? Certainly there is nothing in this "first [basic] knowledge" that *proves* it is true, except clear and distinct perception. This would be enough, if nothing perceived in this way ever turned out to be false. Alas! He has earlier thought true many things of which he later recognized the doubtfulness. He thought he perceived the objective world—earth, sky, etc. But what he had was only ideas of these things. He thought he perceived objects around him that gave rise to his ideas. But in this he erred; his only direct perception was within his own mind.

Well then, in simple arithmetic and geometry are not the basic things we go by so clear to the mind that one can call them true (two and three make five)? If such things are to be doubted, it can only be because we are created so that we perceive falsely. And this Descartes cannot really believe. But he puts aside the question of God, whose very existence he has not yet proven to himself, noting that this is something to be taken up presently, and also whether God could possibly deceive.

Here the philosopher pauses to get a good grip on his thoughts and approach them in an orderly way. (As he says: so as to pass little by little from those he finds already in his mind to those he will presently discover there.) This "orderly" approach begins by grouping the kinds of thought he has into types, to see whether one or another is more likely to contain error. "Ideas" or images—including "even God"—he distinguishes from other forms of thought such as "willing, feeling, approving, denying," and so on. One conclusion he quickly arrives at is that even imaginary ideas (angels, mythical creatures, or the like) are not strictly speaking *false,* for they are certainly in his mind. The only danger of real error

[5] Augustine, fifth-century Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, developed the theme that one is able to calculate degrees of finite perfection only by some prior standard. This presupposes at least incipient knowledge of God as infinite in perfection. The changeable and dependent is comprehensible only in the light of the unchangeable and eternal. Augustine also anticipated Descartes by insisting that to doubt is to be conscious that one exists. Even if I am deceived in the act of knowing, that very activity contains an implicit awareness that I am. (*The City of God,* XI, 26.)

lies in the matter of judgment when it comes to possibly imagining that these ideas of things outside himself *are* in fact like the reality.

The best proof that notions of external objects do correspond to reality seems to be when they do not follow one's own will, but appear to have an existence of their own. At the moment of writing he feels heat, whether he wills to think of it or not. So he is persuaded that the feeling is produced by something outside himself. It seems probable that this object (the fire by which he is sitting) impresses its own quality upon his senses, rather than a likeness of anything else. This process of being "imprinted" by things outside his own mind Descartes calls "being instructed by nature."

But are these proofs convincing? He has to admit that what moves him to believe in a direct connection between such impressions and a reality around him is only a "certain spontaneous inclination" and not the "natural light" which "has shown me that I am from the fact that I doubt. . . ." This inner, "natural light" he notes as the only power that can really teach him what is true or false. No other can be trusted. Natural *impulse,* for instance, easily goes astray between virtue and vice. Why should he trust its findings as between the false and the true?

Even the fact that things do not depend on one's own will is not really proof of the assumption that one's notions of reality come from outside oneself. Perhaps there is some faculty in man that produces them? And even if they do come from outside, there is nothing to prove that they resemble reality. Many experiences suggest that our impressions are unreliable. The sun appears to human sight very small, yet the calculations of astronomy tell us it is several times the size of the earth. Which is true? Apparently not the idea that came from direct observation.

Thus among external things our judgment operates without any element of inner certainty. Rather, a sort of blind impulse makes us believe that reality is like our ideas of it.

But there is another method of getting at the question. Ideas considered as modes of thought do not differ very much, but if taken as images they are extremely different from each other. Descartes finds ideas of *substance* much clearer than those representing "modes" or "accidents." Astonishing to us now, the idea of a supreme God strikes him as having "certainly more objective reality in itself than those ideas by which finite substances are represented." We must note that the philosopher uses the terms "formal reality" and "objective reality" in ways that are puzzling to us, almost the reverse of our current usage. "Actual or formal reality" is used of things in the outer world, and "merely . . . objective reality" of ideas that exist only in the mind. Even so, Descartes' statement of the idea of God as having greater reality to the mind than finite substances is remarkable.

But to continue. In the case of cause and effect, the philosopher's inner and limited but very sure sense of truth tells him that there must be as much reality in a cause as in the effect, or how could the effect come into being? Something cannot come from nothing. A more perfect thing or idea cannot come from one less perfect. Here the philosopher is not denying the processes of learning or growth in a developing person. He is thinking in the terms of late medieval philosophy which assumed that what has more "formal reality" cannot come from what has less. A stone that does not yet exist cannot be produced except by something—or some condition—that has in it every necessary element that enters into the composition and formation of that particular stone. Even my idea of the stone comes from *something*. It may not be an item of "extended" or material substance like the stone, but one cannot say it is nothing.

And the *idea* of a stone, says Descartes, cannot exist in the mind unless put there by something that has at least as much reality as I attribute to the stone. He continues an intricate discussion of the relation of degrees of reality in ideas and "formal" (i.e., real) things. The upshot of this line of reasoning is that there are some kinds of ideas of which he himself *cannot* be the cause. If this is true, it follows that he is not alone in the universe. A good many of the images we ordinarily entertain, he shows, might be produced from what is already in our minds. But there remains the idea of God, with His great and wonderful attributes. The more he thinks of these, the less possible it seems that they could originate in his own mind. Thus in deepening respect and reverence, even in the midst of his philosophical explorations, he comes to the conclusion that God necessarily exists.

Social conditioning in childhood was, of course, outside the framework of Descartes' thinking, and Mill and Freud were still far in the future. It is a question whether, even to those who believe most sincerely, love God most dearly, Descartes' logical arguments nowadays carry much weight. Our reasons for faith are of a different kind. (Nor did his own faith wait for arguments, for that matter.) His explicit proofs of the existence of God may appear to us more like rationalizations than perceptions. But Descartes' effort to get intellectually at the very foundations of existence, his way of feeling around for it, seems in some ways—and in spite of its very dissimilar outcome—not unlike Heidegger's effort to articulate the nature of "Being itself."

Descartes began work on his *Meditations on the First Philosophy* soon after settling in Holland. In 1640 he sent a copy of the manuscript to a friend in Paris with the direction to expose it to thinkers and scholars there for their reactions. By this means he acquired a formidable list of objections, which he included in the latter part of the work, together with

his own replies, when it was finally published in 1641. The following excerpt is approximately the first half of this third "Meditation."

(From René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," *The Philosophical Works of Descartes,* E. S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, trans. [New York: Dover Publications, 1955], pp. 157–65. Footnotes in this selection are the translators'.)

MEDITATION III.
OF GOD: THAT HE EXISTS.

I shall now close my eyes, I shall stop my ears, I shall call away all my senses, I shall efface even from my thoughts all the images of corporeal things, or at least (for that is hardly possible) I shall esteem them as vain and false; and thus holding converse only with myself and considering my own nature, I shall try little by little to reach a better knowledge of and a more familiar acquaintanceship with myself. I am a thing that thinks, that is to say, that doubts, affirms, denies, that knows a few things, that is ignorant of many [that loves, that hates], that wills, that desires, that also imagines and perceives; for as I remarked before, although the things which I perceive and imagine are perhaps nothing at all apart from me and in themselves, I am nevertheless assured that these modes of thought that I call perceptions and imaginations, inasmuch only as they are modes of thought, certainly reside [and are met with] in me.

And in the little that I have just said, I think I have summed up all that I really know, or at least all that hitherto I was aware that I knew. In order to try to extend my knowledge further, I shall now look around more carefully and see whether I cannot still discover in myself some other things which I have not hitherto perceived. I am certain that I am a thing which thinks; but do I not then likewise know what is requisite to render me certain of a truth? Certainly in this first knowledge there is nothing that assures me of its truth, excepting the clear and distinct perception of that which I state, which would not indeed suffice to assure me that what I say is true, if it could ever happen that a thing which I conceived so clearly and distinctly could be false; and accordingly it seems to me that already I can establish as a general rule that all things which I perceive[1] very clearly and very distinctly are true.

At the same time I have before received and admitted many things to be very certain and manifest, which yet I afterwards recognised as being dubious. What then were these things? They were the earth, sky, stars and all other objects which I apprehended by means of the senses. But

[1] Percipio, F. nous concevons.

what did I clearly [and distinctly] perceive in them? Nothing more than that the ideas or thoughts of these things were presented to my mind. And not even now do I deny that these ideas are met with in me. But there was yet another thing which I affirmed, and which, owing to the habit which I had formed of believing it, I thought I perceived very clearly, although in truth I did not perceive it at all, to wit, that there were objects outside of me from which these ideas proceeded, and to which they were entirely similar. And it was in this that I erred, or, if perchance my judgment was correct, this was not due to any knowledge arising from my perception.

But when I took anything very simple and easy in the sphere of arithmetic or geometry into consideration, e.g. that two and three together made five, and other things of the sort, were not these present to my mind so clearly as to enable me to affirm that they were true? Certainly if I judge that since such matters could be doubted, this would not have been so for any other reason than that it came into my mind that perhaps a God might have endowed me with such a nature that I may have been deceived even concerning things which seemed to me most manifest. But every time that this preconceived opinion of the sovereign power of a God presents itself to my thought, I am constrained to confess that it is easy to Him, if He wishes it, to cause me to err, even in matters in which I believe myself to have the best evidence. And, on the other hand, always when I direct my attention to things which I believe myself to perceive very clearly, I am so persuaded of their truth that I let myself break out into words such as these: Let who will deceive me, He can never cause me to be nothing while I think that I am, or some day cause it to be true to say that I have never been, it being true now to say that I am, or that two and three make more or less than five, or any such thing in which I see a manifest contradiction. And, certainly, since I have no reason to believe that there is a God who is a deceiver, and as I have not yet satisfied myself that there is a God at all, the reason for doubt which depends on this opinion alone is very slight, and so to speak metaphysical. But in order to be able altogether to remove it, I must inquire whether there is a God as soon as the occasion presents itself; and if I find that there is a God, I must also inquire whether He may be a deceiver; for without a knowledge of these two truths I do not see that I can ever be certain of anything.

And in order that I may have an opportunity of inquiring into this in an orderly way [without interrupting the order of meditation which I have proposed to myself, and which is little by little to pass from the notions which I find first of all in my mind to those which I shall later on discover in it] it is requisite that I should here divide my thoughts into certain kinds, and that I should consider in which of these kinds

there is, properly speaking, truth or error to be found. Of my thoughts some are, so to speak, images of the things, and to these alone is the title "idea" properly applied; examples are my thought of a man or of a chimera, of heaven, of an angel, or [even] of God. But other thoughts possess other forms as well. For example in willing, fearing, approving, denying, though I always perceive something as the subject of the action of my mind,[2] yet by this action I always add something else to the idea[3] which I have of that thing; and of the thoughts of this kind some are called volitions or affections, and others judgments.

Now as to what concerns ideas, if we consider them only in themselves and do not relate them to anything else beyond themselves, they cannot properly speaking be false; for whether I imagine a goat or a chimera, it is not less true that I imagine the one than the other. We must not fear likewise that falsity can enter into will and into affections, for although I may desire evil things, or even things that never existed, it is not the less true that I desire them. Thus there remains no more than the judgments which we make, in which I must take the greatest care not to deceive myself. But the principal error and the commonest which we may meet with in them, consists in my judging that the ideas which are in me are similar or conformable to the things which are outside me; for without doubt if I considered the ideas only as certain modes of my thoughts, without trying to relate them to anything beyond, they could scarcely give me material for error.

But among these ideas, some appear to me to be innate, some adventitious, and others to be formed [or invented] by myself; for, as I have the power of understanding what is called a thing, or a truth, or a thought, it appears to me that I hold this power from no other source than my own nature. But if I now hear some sound, if I see the sun, or feel heat, I have hitherto judged that these sensations proceeded from certain things that exist outside of me; and finally it appears to me that sirens, hippogryphs, and the like, are formed out of my own mind. But again I may possibly persuade myself that all these ideas are of the nature of those which I term adventitious, or else that they are all innate, or all fictitious: for I have not yet clearly discovered their true origin.

And my principal task in this place is to consider, in respect to those ideas which appear to me to proceed from certain objects that are outside me, what are the reasons which cause me to think them similar to these objects. It seems indeed in the first place that I am taught this lesson by nature; and, secondly, I experience in myself that these ideas do not

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[2] The French version is followed here as being more explicit. In it "action de mon esprit" replaces "mea cogitatio."

[3] In the Latin version "similitudinem."

depend on my will nor therefore on myself—for they often present themselves to my mind in spite of my will. Just now, for instance, whether I will or whether I do not will, I feel heat, and thus I persuade myself that this feeling, or at least this idea of heat, is produced in me by something which is different from me, i.e. by the heat of the fire near which I sit. And nothing seems to me more obvious than to judge that this object imprints its likeness rather than anything else upon me.

Now I must discover whether these proofs are sufficiently strong and convincing. When I say that I am so instructed by nature, I merely mean a certain spontaneous inclination which impels me to believe in this connection, and not a natural light which makes me recognise that it is true. But these two things are very different; for I cannot doubt that which the natural light causes me to believe to be true, as, for example, it has shown me that I am from the fact that I doubt, or other facts of the same kind. And I possess no other faculty whereby to distinguish truth from falsehood, which can teach me that what this light shows me to be true is not really true, and no other faculty that is equally trustworthy. But as far as [apparently] natural impulses are concerned, I have frequently remarked, when I had to make active choice between virtue and vice, that they often enough led me to the part that was worse; and this is why I do not see any reason for following them in what regards truth and error.

And as to the other reason, which is that these ideas must proceed from objects outside me, since they do not depend on my will, I do not find it any the more convincing. For just as these impulses of which I have spoken are found in me, notwithstanding that they do not always concur with my will, so perhaps there is in me some faculty fitted to produce these ideas without the assistance of any external things, even though it is not yet known by me; just as, apparently, they have hitherto always been found in me during sleep without the aid of any external objects.

And finally, though they did proceed from objects different from myself, it is not a necessary consequence that they should resemble these. On the contrary, I have noticed that in many cases there was a great difference between the object and its idea. I find, for example, two completely diverse ideas of the sun in my mind; the one derives its origin from the senses, and should be placed in the category of adventitious ideas; according to this idea the sun seems to be extremely small; but the other is derived from astronomical reasonings, i.e. is elicited from certain notions that are innate in me, or else it is formed by me in some other manner; in accordance with it the sun appears to be several times greater than the earth. These two ideas cannot, indeed, both resemble the same

sun, and reason makes me believe that the one which seems to have originated directly from the sun itself, is the one which is most dissimilar to it.

All this causes me to believe that until the present time it has not been by a judgment that was certain [or premeditated], but only by a sort of blind impulse that I believed that things existed outside of, and different from me, which, by the organs of my senses, or by some other method whatever it might be, conveyed these ideas or images to me and imprinted on me their similitudes.

But there is yet another method of inquiring whether any of the objects of which I have ideas within me exist outside of me. If ideas are only taken as certain modes of thought, I recognise amongst them no difference or inequality, and all appear to proceed from me in the same manner; but when we consider them as images, one representing one thing and the other another, it is clear that they are very different one from the other. There is no doubt that those which represent to me substances are something more, and contain so to speak more objective reality within them [that is to say, by representation participate in a higher degree of being or perfection] than those that simply represent modes or accidents; and that idea again by which I understand a supreme God, eternal, infinite, [immutable], omniscient, omnipotent, and Creator of all things which are outside of Himself, has certainly more objective reality in itself than those ideas by which finite substances are represented.

Now it is manifest by the natural light that there must at least be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect. For, pray, whence can the effect derive its reality, if not from its cause? And in what way can this cause communicate this reality to it, unless it possessed it in itself? And from this it follows, not only that something cannot proceed from nothing, but likewise that what is more perfect—that is to say, which has more reality within itself—cannot proceed from the less perfect. And this is not only evidently true of those effects which possess actual or formal reality, but also of the ideas in which we consider merely what is termed objective reality. To take an example, the stone which has not yet existed not only cannot now commence to be unless it has been produced by something which possesses within itself, either formally or eminently, all that enters into the composition of the stone [i.e. it must possess the same things or other more excellent things than those which exist in the stone] and heat can only be produced in a subject in which it did not previously exist by a cause that is of an order [degree or kind] at least as perfect as heat; and so in all other cases. But further, the idea of heat, or of a stone, cannot exist in me unless it has been placed within

me by some cause which possesses within it at least as much reality as that which I conceive to exist in the heat or the stone. For although this does not transmit anything of its actual or formal reality to my idea, we must not for that reason imagine that it is necessarily a less real cause; we must remember that [since every idea is a work of the mind] its nature is such that it demands of itself no other formal reality than that which it borrows from my thought, of which it is only a mode [i.e. a manner or way of thinking]. But in order that an idea should contain some one certain objective reality rather than another, it must without doubt derive it from some cause in which there is at least as much formal reality as this idea contains of objective reality. For if we imagine that something is found in an idea which is not found in the cause, it must then have been derived from nought; but however imperfect may be this mode of being by which a thing is objectively [or by representation] in the understanding by its idea, we cannot certainly say that this mode of being is nothing, nor, consequently, that the idea derives its origin from nothing.

Nor must I imagine that, since the reality that I consider in these ideas is only objective, it is not essential that this reality should be formally in the causes of my ideas, but that it is sufficient that it should be found objectively. For just as this mode of objective existence pertains to ideas by their proper nature, so does the mode of formal existence pertain to the causes of those ideas (this is at least true of the first and principal) by the nature peculiar to them. And although it may be the case that one idea gives birth to another idea, that cannot continue to be so indefinitely; for in the end we must reach an idea whose cause shall be so to speak an archetype, in which the whole reality [or perfection] which is so to speak objectively or [by representation] in these ideas is contained formally [and really]. Thus the light of nature causes me to know clearly that the ideas in me are like [pictures or] images which can, in truth, easily fall short of the perfection of the objects from which they have been derived, but which can never contain anything greater or more perfect.

And the longer and the more carefully that I investigate these matters, the more clearly and distinctly do I recognise their truth. But what am I to conclude from it all in the end? It is this, that if the objective reality of any one of my ideas is of such a nature as clearly to make me recognise that it is not in me either formally or eminently, and that consequently I cannot myself be the cause of it, it follows of necessity that I am not alone in the world, but that there is another being which exists, or which is the cause of this idea. On the other hand, had no such an idea existed in me, I should have had no sufficient argument to convince me of the existence of any being beyond myself; for I have made very careful

investigation everywhere and up to the present time have been able to find no other ground.

But of my ideas, beyond that which represents me to myself, as to which there can here be no difficulty, there is another which represents a God, and there are others representing corporeal and inanimate things, others angels, others animals, and others again which represent to me men similar to myself.

As regards the ideas which represent to me other men or animals, or angels, I can however easily conceive that they might be formed by an admixture of the other ideas which I have of myself, or corporeal things, and of God, even although there were apart from me neither men nor animals, nor angels, in all the world.

And in regard to the ideas of corporeal objects, I do not recognise in them anything so great or so excellent that they might not have possibly proceeded from myself; for if I consider them more closely, and examine them individually, as I yesterday examined the idea of wax, I find that there is very little in them which I perceive clearly and distinctly. Magnitude or extension in length, breadth, or depth, I do so perceive; also figure which results from a termination of this extension, the situation which bodies of different figure preserve in relation to one another, and movement or change of situation; to which we may also add substance, duration and number. As to other things such as light, colours, sounds, scents, tastes, heat, cold and the other tactile qualities, they are thought by me with so much obscurity and confusion that I do not even know if they are true or false, i.e. whether the ideas which I form of these qualities are actually the ideas of real objects or not [or whether they only represent chimeras which cannot exist in fact]. For although I have before remarked that it is only in judgments that falsity, properly speaking, or formal falsity, can be met with, a certain material falsity may nevertheless be found in ideas, i.e. when these ideas represent what is nothing as though it were something. For example, the ideas which I have of cold and heat are so far from clear and distinct that by their means I cannot tell whether cold is merely a privation of heat, or heat a privation of cold, or whether both are real qualities, or are not such. And inasmuch as [since ideas resemble images] there cannot be any ideas which do not appear to represent some thing, if it is correct to say that cold is merely a privation of heat, the idea which represents it to me as something real and positive will not be improperly termed false, and the same holds good of other similar ideas.

To these it is certainly not necessary that I should attribute any author other than myself. For if they are false, i.e. if they represent things which do not exist, the light of nature shows me that they issue from nought, that is to say, that they are only in me in so far as something is

lacking to the perfection of my nature. But if they are true, nevertheless because they exhibit so little reality to me that I cannot even clearly distinguish the thing represented from non-being, I do not see any reason why they should not be produced by myself.

As to the clear and distinct idea which I have of corporeal things, some of them seem as though I might have derived them from the idea which I possess of myself, as those which I have of substance, duration, number, and such like. For [even] when I think that a stone is a substance, or at least a thing capable of existing of itself, and that I am a substance also, although I conceive that I am a thing that thinks and not one that is extended, and that the stone on the other hand is an extended thing which does not think, and that thus there is a notable difference between the two conceptions—they seem, nevertheless, to agree in this, that both represent substances. In the same way, when I perceive that I now exist and further recollect that I have in former times existed, and when I remember that I have various thoughts of which I can recognise the number, I acquire ideas of duration and number which I can afterwards transfer to any object that I please. But as to all the other qualities of which the ideas of corporeal things are composed, to wit, extension, figure, situation and motion, it is true that they are not formally in me, since I am only a thing that thinks; but because they are merely certain modes of substance [and so to speak the vestments under which corporeal substance appears to us] and because I myself am also a substance, it would seem that they might be contained in me eminently.

Hence there remains only the idea of God, concerning which we must consider whether it is something which cannot have proceeded from me myself. By the name God I understand a substance that is infinite [eternal, immutable], independent, all-knowing, all-powerful, and by which I myself and everything else, if anything else does exist, have been created. Now all these characteristics are such that the more diligently I attend to them, the less do they appear capable of proceeding from me alone; hence, from what has been already said, we must conclude that God necessarily exists.

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In the remainder of this Meditation, Descartes tries to show how the idea of God is the "most true, clear and distinct of all the ideas" in the mind. Here his reasoning is strikingly similar to that of Augustine. To be aware of oneself in the midst of doubting is at the same time to be aware of one's dependence and lack of complete perfection. But to know oneself as finite and less than perfect is possible only in light of a prior vision of God as infinite and unqualifiedly good. We may be persuaded, then, that God exists, and this in concrete reality rather than as a mere ab-

stract idea. He alone can account for our dependent existence and our approximations toward a perfection which is "formally or eminently" in Him.

Descartes' total contribution to cultural history and to the faith-truth story is far-reaching and complex. In some ways he represented both the old and the new of his time: both medieval Scholasticism and emerging secularism. God and the soul are primary certainties, but defined in rather secular terms. "God" is the ordered necessity, the stability behind contingency and change. The "soul" is the "thinking substance" more or less tenuously related to "extended substance." Man is marked by rationality and self-consciousness, but this thinker is able to use medieval phraseology in speaking of the "natural light of pure intellectual apprehension."

The effect of his thought, however, was to drive a sharp wedge between what we term the ego, as consciousness or awareness, and the world, as impersonal and mechanically ordered process. His tour de force, elsewhere, in attempting to find in the pineal gland the focus of the divinely ordered relation between the self and the world was bound to be challenged and discredited. Thus Spinoza was later able to bypass matter in favor of spiritual substance, while Hobbes was equally able to ignore mind in favor of matter.

In the search for truth as conceived by Descartes, the self alone is sure. It is clearly marked off from its world, the subject from the object. Truth is attained in arrangements of manipulation and control by the subject. The mathematical model with its stress on clarity tended to emphasize measurement and difference rather than the idea in context—also fact rather than feeling, rational science rather than visionary religion and poetry. What could be "felt as truth" would henceforth need to be stated in increasingly secular terms.

2. Jonathan Edwards

1703-1758

American theologian and metaphysician, Congregational preacher, evangelist. Born in East Windsor, Conn., only son among 11 children. Devout very young, wrote tract on "Nature of the Soul." For lack of schools was taught at home with other pupils, graduated from Yale at 17. Fascinated by science and space. Studied and preached briefly in New York, tutored at Yale. In 1727 went to Northampton, Mass., to join ministry of his grandfather, whom he succeeded in 1729. Preached and lectured widely. Married, had 12 children. Sometimes called "last of the great New England Calvinists." Much influenced by Berkeley and Locke. Held revival meetings which brought "Great Awakening" to New England. In 1750 was dismissed in controversy as to basis of Communion for new members. During the following decade was missionary to the Indians and pastor to a group of settlers in Stockbridge, Mass., but spent much time writing. In 1757 called to presidency of Princeton University, where he died of faulty smallpox inoculation the next year.

"The special work of the Spirit of God, or that which is peculiar to the Saints, consists in giving the sensible knowledge of the things of religion. . . ."

"All saving conviction of divine truth does most essentially arise from the spiritual sense of the excellency of divine things. . . ."

By contrast with Descartes, Jonathan Edwards comes at the question of how we perceive truth more from the side of the object. He thus shares the characteristic empirical temper of England and America as compared with the rationalist bias on the Continent.[1] Descartes subordinated the object to the subject, and sensory data to the thinking self. For Edwards (if one may exaggerate a little) the subject is more nearly derived from the object and the human ego from sense experience. The empiricism of Locke was an important influence shaping his thought in this direction.

During his period in Stockbridge, Edwards produced some of his major works: The Freedom of the Will, The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended, Concerning the End for which God created the World, *and* The Nature of True Virtue.

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[1] This comparison, which should not be overdrawn, has been made by William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, eds., *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1962), Vol III, p. 126.

John Locke (1632–1704)[*] took sensation as his fundamental starting point. Apart from sensation, he asserted, the mind like a blank sheet of paper is completely lacking in content or quality.[2] Sound knowledge is attained by the "historical, plain method" of reexamining and tracing "complex" ideas back to their "simpler" sense attributes. This validates the reflective processes involved in such an approach to truth. Knowledge includes "direct sensation" (specific encounters with the world external to the knowing mind), "intuition" (immediate perception of agreement or difference between ideas), and "demonstration" (a more complex series of intuitions). No ideas are "innate." All are ultimately derived from primary sensation. This is true whether of "primary qualities" from the side of the object (solidity, extension, figure, mobility, number), or "secondary qualities" from the side of the subject (sounds, tastes, colors, odors).[3]

Thus the "truth of reason" has to do with ideas validated in terms of their grounding in sensation and reflection. In contrast, the "truth of faith" depended, for Locke, on the authority of revealed disclosures, supported by "outward signs" such as miracles and fulfilled prophecies. In Christianity these truths are linked with the power of the gospel and the factual details of the life of Jesus. There is, of course, no direct tie to ordinary facts of sense, as in rational truth. Faith calls us to accept statements that have no "one-to-one" link, in direct encounter, with sensory data, such as Lessing demanded. Validation may come in terms of the authority of the proposer. Or it may depend on the larger intuitive situation, where the experience of mystery and power associated with given sensory data carries conviction. This is without direct empirical evidence or the possibility of rational deductions.[4]

Locke had a view of the relation between words and experience which is also significant for our story. Words, he considered, are arbitrary signs attached by social convention to ideas based on sense. They thus

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[*] *English philosopher. Political and philosophical views have had enormous influence in England and the United States. Studied medicine. Apparently did not complete his degree. Lectured in philosophy at Oxford, 1660–64. Held various offices. A strong advocate of civil and religious liberty. Voluntary exile in Holland, 1682–89, during the English revolution. Most profound philosophical writing is* An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.

[2] *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*

[3] *Ibid.*, Book I.

[4] See Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity,* Ian T. Ramsey, ed. and intro. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp. 12–17, in the series "A Library of Modern Religious Thought" edited by Henry Chadwick. Ramsey argues (in technical philosophic language) that at least one way to look at Locke's views of revealed propositions is to say that they are connected with idea particulars. Not with deducible links as in truths of reason, but in a kind of "total intuitive situation," not unlike that in which we "intuit our own active power."

have varying degrees of liveliness. They can be more or less detached from basic sensation and can be spoken by those who have forgotten the experience. Or by those who have barely felt it, or even by those who have no primary experience at all of the object or meaning concerned.[5]

Edwards read this Lockean empiricism through the Scriptures as shaped by the Augustinian, neo-Platonic, Calvinist, and Puritan traditions. He found himself in eighteenth-century New England quarreling with both the antimystical rationalism of the "Deists" and the irrational mysticism of the "Enthusiasts" that marked the revivalism of the "Great Awakening"[6] in New England at the time. The Deists lacked "ardor," because of divorcing the word from living experience. The Enthusiasts lacked "order," because they separated living experience from the rational word. Religion is an affair of the heart, a direct personal experience of God rather than mere intellectual assent to propositions of faith. But it is also a matter of "reasonable affection."[7] By this Edwards meant that there could be no love without knowledge. For the heart cannot be inclined toward an object of which there is no idea in the understanding.

Authentic religion, Edwards thought, is neither unfeeling rationalism nor irrational emotion. It catches up intellect no less than feeling and will. Word and sense are united in a living, pulsating whole. Adapting a Kantian phrase, one may legitimately say that for Edwards "word apart from sensation is empty, and sensory experience without word is blind."

The "truth of faith" is a matter of the heart no less than of head and hands, a view captured in Edwards' striking phrase, "sense of the heart." This does not mean a faculty separate from or simply added to ordinary sense perception. It *is* sensory experience precisely as qualified in a man of faith. It comes not in terms of "indirect cogitation" based on verbal signs, but as ideas rooted in active, immediate experience. Here the "object" (whatever it may be) is perceived by the "subject" in terms of threat or promise, potential good or evil, beauty or ugliness, pleasure or pain. This is sense experience qualified by anxiety and hope, fear and love. It involves passion and action grounded in a vision of spiritual excel-

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[5] Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, especially chap. I.

[6] This term has come to stand for various revivals of religious life in eighteenth-century America. New England was one of the important centers of renewal. Here Edwards sought to balance the extremes of emotionalism which at times accompanied the "awakenings" with an appeal to sobriety. But he welcomed the possibility of recapturing a lively religious experience as a corrective to any type of sterile rationalism.

[7] This very phrase reflects Edwards' determination to combat any type of false separation between "order" and "ardor," or between the rational and affective components of life and faith. Here he anticipates the emphasis more recently met in Tillich with his insistence that the truth of faith is a total act, including intellect and will no less than feeling (See sec. vi below).

lence—a vision of virtue, goodness, and beauty, or of God as all-inclusive Being.

Our selection is from Edwards' notes for what was to have been his major work, of which only fragments have been published. He begins by considering how rapidly, in the ordinary course of reading, we take in words standing for things of great consequence or complexity. We use them as signs pointing *toward* those things, so to speak, without having at the moment any full or complex awareness of what the words really represent. In a minute or two we can read a whole page of print. Yet that one page may contain such words as *God, man, angel, people, misery, happiness,* and so forth. We cannot possibly in an instant of reading fully realize the meaning of any one of them.

In much of our thinking words are used as signs instead of calling up complete ideas. When it comes to inner experience, however, one cannot have the idea of a thing without to some degree having—or having had—the thing itself. One cannot have an idea of pain or trouble, for instance, without having felt pain or trouble to some degree. Yet in practice, when we read or speak of such things, and especially when they concern other people, we use words as signs without thinking or feeling very much about the reality back of them. We also use a sort of idea-shorthand in our minds, by which we allude to complex inner experience without becoming fully aware of it. This "shorthand" consists of brief images or mention of circumstances. Confused passing notions of things is what we mostly think by.

All this is unavoidable. For (a) it is hard to excite in the human mind a full idea of anything, and (b) if we did, thinking and speech would become so slow as to be impractical. For the most part, this habitual unconscious sign language of words works quite well. But when something comes up that is new, by way of argument or implication, then we have to set forth the actual idea instead of a mere sign, and do it as lucidly as possible.

This shows, says Edwards, how inferior man's understanding is to the divine. For God is fully and perfectly aware of the reality of all things without having to use signs, "and all in the highest possible perfection of clearness, and all permanently." Whereas man's understanding, on the other hand, is often hopelessly complicated by his very use of words and allied sign language. It is a major source of error and misunderstanding in life, every error freely compounding others.

Thus there are really two modes of thinking and understanding, especially spiritual or mental things. In one we do not directly view anything, but use a vocabulary of signs "which is a kind of mental reading." In the other, which may properly be called apprehension, "the mind has a direct ideal view, or contemplation of the thing thought of."

The latter "ideal apprehension" is also of two kinds. It involves either things of the mind ("mere discerning, judging, or speculation") or things belonging to "the other faculty," i.e., the will or "what is figuratively called the heart." By that term is meant the faculty by which "things are pleasing or displeasing, including all agreeableness and disagreeableness, all beauty and deformity, all pleasure and pain," and so on. This is called having a "sense" of things—accurately enough, for one cannot have it without experiencing them to some degree.

Thus, understanding of mental and especially spiritual things is of two kinds: speculation or "understanding of the head," and "sense of the heart." The first functions by intellectual signs. The second is "sensible knowledge." All knowledge of good and evil, all values, everything that concerns "the heart, or the will and affections," is of this latter kind.

Edwards goes on to explore the relation of the will to this kind of knowledge. In all its determinations the will is influenced by the "sense of the heart." And here again we come to a division, first into the sources of "sensible knowledge," and then according to objects of it.

The sources are once more twofold. The writer goes into some detail as to "purely natural" knowledge, which comes in the course of ordinary experience, memory, and reflection. All the normal processes combine in constantly shifting and developing awareness. Thus "men may, by mere nature, come to have a sense of the importance, or terribleness, or desirableness of many things." On the other hand, for real spiritual insight, the things that concern us most closely, the help of the Spirit of God is needed. Without it we cannot know spiritual things at all.

The analysis of kinds of "sensible knowledge" according to objects of it shows two groups. There are those that give rise to a sense of natural good or evil (or, one may suppose, advantage or gratification), and those that relate to spiritual good or evil. These categories Edwards describes in some detail. He proceeds further to speak of religious awakenings, conviction, and illumination, and the part of the Spirit in setting off these experiences in man. For an "ideal apprehension and sensible knowledge of the things of religion" is the chief source of man's conviction of truth. This cannot come to him without the Spirit. The apprehension of spiritual excellence—or the belief in it through saving faith—is the source of all conviction of the truth of divine things.

Yet apprehension of spiritual excellence depends on knowledge of what is natural in religion. The sense of God's glory and of the excellence of the salvation of Christ depends on knowledge of the misery and guilt of the world. Thus the two aspects dovetail. The way of salvation is so perfectly fitting to reason and the nature of things, and so obviously beyond ourselves, that it is clearly God's contrivance.

The following selection, published in 1948 in the *Harvard Theological*

Review, is taken from a mass of handwritten notes on homemade folios. These are now in Yale University Library, entitled "Miscellaneous Observations," and consist of over 1200 entries of which this is No. 782. It is said to date from the later years in Northampton, perhaps about 1745. Edwards had planned over some years a definitive work which he intended to call "A Rational Account of the Main Doctrines of the Christian Religion Attempted." Perry Miller in the accompanying introduction suggests that much of Edwards' best thought is found here and that, if finished, it would have transcended the Age of Reason and anticipated Kierkegaard. Our selection includes the entire fragment.

(From Jonathan Edwards, "Miscellaneous Observations," No. 782, "Ideas, Sense of the Heart, Spiritual Knowledge or Conviction. Faith." Manuscript fragment in Yale University Library, published with an introduction by Perry Miller, ed., as "Jonathan Edwards on the Sense of the Heart," *Harvard Theological Review,* Vol. XLI, No. 2 [April 1948]. Excerpt from Edwards pp. 129–45.)

782. IDEAS, SENSE OF THE HEART, SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE OR CONVICTION. FAITH.

[A] great part of our thoughts and the discourse of our minds concerning [things] is without the actual ideas of those things of which we discourse and reason; but the mind makes use of signs instead of the ideas themselves.

A little attentive reflection may be enough to convince anyone of this. Let any man for his own satisfaction take any book and read down one page of it, as fast as he ordinarily is wont to read with understanding. He finishes perhaps the whole page in almost a minute of time; wherein it may be were many such terms as God, man, angel, people, misery, happiness, salvation, destruction, consideration, perplexity, sanctification, and many more such like; and then let him consider whether he has had the actual ideas of all those things, and things signified by every other word in the whole page, in this short space of time; as particularly let him consider whether or no, when in the course of his reading he came upon the word God in such a line, which his mind dwelt not a moment upon, whether or no he had an actual idea of God—i.e., whether he had an actual idea [at] that moment of those things that are principally essential in an idea of God, or whether he had an actual idea of supremacy, of supreme power, of supreme government, of superior knowledge, of will, etc. I apprehend that diligent attention will convince him that he has no natural idea of one of those things when he understandingly reads, or hears, or speaks the word God.

I will instance but in one thing that seems most fundamental of all in the idea of God, viz. understanding or knowledge. He will find that in such cases he had no actual idea at all of this; for if he had an actual idea of understanding or knowledge, then he had an actual idea of ideas, or ideas of perception or consciousness, of judging or perceiving connections and relations between different ideas; and so had an actual idea of various ideas, and [of the] relations between them.

So when he reads the word people, let him enquire whether he had any actual idea of that which was signified by this word. In order to do this he must have an actual idea of man. I do not mean only a confused idea of an outward appearance like that of man, for if that was all, that was not an idea of man properly, but only a sign made use of instead of an idea: but he must have an actual idea of those things, wherein manhood most essentially consists: as an idea of reason, which contains many other actual ideas, as an actual idea of consciousness, an actual idea of a disposal of ideas in the mind, an actual idea of a consequent perception of relation and connections between them, etc. And so he must have an actual idea of will which contains an actual idea of pleasure or pain, agreeableness, or disagreeableness, and a consequent concord of imperate [sic] acts of the soul, etc.

So when he reads the word perplexity, let him consider whether he had an actual idea of that actual thing signified by that word, which contained many actual ideas, as an actual idea of thought, and an actual idea of intenseness of thought, an actual idea of [desire], and also earnestness of desire; then an actual idea of disappointment, or crossness to desire, which contains many other actual ideas, and an actual idea of manifoldness of troubles and crosses, etc.

So when he reads the word sanctification, the actual idea of which contains a great many actual ideas, viz. an actual idea of what is implied in the faculties of an intelligent voluntary being, and then an actual idea of holiness, which contains a great number of other actual ideas.

But I need not insist on more instances, I should think that those might be enough to convince anyone that there is very often no actual idea of those things when we are said to think of them; and that the thought is not employed about things themselves immediately, or immediately exercised in the idea itself, but only some sign that the mind habitually substitutes in the room of the idea.

Our thoughts are oftentimes ten times swifter than our reading or speech. Men oftentimes think that in a few minutes, which it would take them a long time to speak. And if there be no room to suppose that all the ideas signified by the words of a discourse can be actually excited in the mind in reading or speaking, much less can it be in such swift discourse of thought.

We thus in the discourse of our minds generally make use of signs instead of ideas; especially with respect to two kinds of subjects of our thoughts: viz.

1. With respect to general things, or kinds and sorts; such are kinds of substances, and such also are what Mr. Locke calls mixed modes. When we in the course of our thoughts, in reading or hearing, or speaking, or meditation, think of any sort of substances or distinct beings, as particulary of men; instead of going about with attention of mind actually to excite the ideas of those things that belong to the nature of man, that are essential to it, and that distinguish it from other creatures, and so having actually such an abstract idea as Mr. Locke speaks of, we have only an idea of something in our mind, either a name, or external sensible idea, that we use as a sign to represent that idea. So when, in the discourse of our minds, there passes a thought of that sort of creatures called lions; or that sort of natural bodies called metals; or that called trees. So in mixed modes, such as confusion; decency; harmony; and the like.

2. It is commonly so in our discourses of those things that we can know only by reflection, which are of a spiritual nature, or things that consist in the ideas, acts, and exercises of minds. It has been shown elsewhere that there is no actual idea of those things but what consists in the actual existence of the same things or like things in our own minds. As for instance, to excite the idea of an idea, we must renew that very idea in our minds: we must have the same idea. To have an actual idea of a thought is to have that thought we have an idea of then in our minds. To have an actual idea of any pleasure or delight, there must be excited a degree of that delight. So to have an actual idea of any trouble or kind of pain, there must be excited a degree of that pain or trouble. And to have an idea of any affection of the mind, there must be, then present, a degree of that affection. This alone is sufficient to show that in great part of our discourses and reasonings on things we are without the actual idea of those things of which we discourse and reason; for most of our discourses and reasonings are about things that belong to minds, or things that we know by reflection, or at least do involve some relation to them in some respect or other. But how far are we, when we speak, or read, or hear, or think of those beings that have minds, or intelligent beings, or of their faculties, and powers, or their dispositions, principles, and acts, and those mixed modes that involve relations to those things, from actually having present in our minds those mental things, those thoughts and those mental acts, that those spiritual things do consist [of], or are related to? Very commonly we discourse about them in our minds, and argue, and reason concerning them, without any idea at all of the things themselves in any degree, but only make use of the signs instead of the ideas; as for instance, how often do we think and speak of the pleasure and delight, or pain

and trouble that such have, or have had in such and such things, or things that do in some respect involve pleasure or pain, in their idea, without the presence of any degree of that pleasure, or that trouble, or any real idea of those troublesome, or pleasing sensations?

Those signs that we are wont to make use of in our thoughts for representations of things, and to substitute in the room of the actual ideas themselves, are either the ideas of the names by which we are wont to call them or the ideas of some external sensible thing that some way belongs to the thing, some sensible image, or resemblance, or some sensible part, or some sensible effect, or sensible concomitant, or a few sensible circumstances. We have the ideas of some of those excited, which we substitute in the room of those things that are most essential and use them as signs, as we do words, and have respect to them no further in our discourse.

Hence we do not stand at all on the clearness and distinctness of that external idea, that we thus make use of, but commonly it is very dim and transient, and exceedingly confused, and indistinct. As when, in a course of meditations, we think of men, angels, nations, conversion, conviction; if he have any thing further in our thoughts to represent those things, than only the words, we commonly have only some very confused passing notion of something external, some [notion] which we do not at all insist on the clearness and distinctness of, nor do we find any need of it, because we make use of that external idea no otherwise than as a sign of the idea, or something to stand in its stead. And the notion need not be distinct in order to do that, because we may habitually understand the use of it as a sign without it. Whereas it would be of great consequence that it should be clear and distinct, if we regarded it as an actual idea, and proper representation of the thing itself.

The signs, that those that have the use of speech do principally make use of in their thoughts, are words, or names; which are indeed very frequently accompanied with some slight confused glance of some sensible idea, that belongs to the thing named; but the name is the principal sign the mind makes use of. Others that are deaf and dumb, do probably make use of the ideas of those signs by which they have been accustomed to signify the thing; or (if we may judge, by what we find in things that we have no names for, as there are many such) they make use of some sensible effect, part, concomitant, or circumstance, as the sign.

It is something external or sensible that we are wont to make use of for signs of the ideas of the things themselves; for they are much more ready at hand, and more easily excited, than ideas of spiritual or mental things, which for the most part cannot be without attentive reflection; and very often the force of the mind is not sufficient to excite them at all, because we are not able to excite in our minds those acts, exercises, or passions, of the mind, that we think of.

We are under a necessity of thus putting signs in our minds instead of the actual ideas of the things signified on several accounts: partly by reason of the difficulty of exciting the actual ideas of things, especially in things that are not external and sensible, which are a kind of things that we are mainly concerned with; and also because, if we must have the actual ideas of everything that comes in our way in the course of our thoughts, this would render our thoughts so slow as to render our powers of thinking in a great measure useless, as may be seen in the instance mentioned of a man reading down a page. Now, when we use signs, instead of the actual ideas themselves, we can sufficiently understand what is contained in that page in a minute of time, and can express the same thoughts to another in a little time by our voices, and can think ten times as swiftly as we can read or speak; but if, in order to assure our understanding of what was contained in that page, we must have an actual idea of everything signified by every word in that page, it would take us up many hours to go through with it; for taking in all the ideas that are either directly signified, or involved in relations that are signified by them, it would take us up a considerable time before we could be said to understand one word. But if our understandings were so slow, it would frustrate all use of reading or writing, and all use of speech, yea, and all improvement of a faculty of thinking too. And if all our thoughts must have proceeded after this slow manner from our infancy, we must have remained infants all the days of our lives, and seventy years would have been sufficient to have proceeded but a few steps in knowledge.

This way of thinking by signs, unless as it is abused to an indulgence of a slothful inattentive disposition, well serves as to many of the common purposes of thinking; for in many respects we, without the actual presence of the idea, know how to use the sign as if it were the idea itself. Having learned by frequent experience, our minds on the presence of the sign being habitually led to the relations and connections with other things, the presence of the sign in the main does by custom as naturally and spontaneously suggest many relations of the thing signified to others as the hearing of such a certain sound, or seeing such letters, does by custom and habit spontaneously excite such a thought. But if we are at a loss concerning a connection or consequence, or have a new inference to draw, or would see the force of some new argument, then commonly we are put to the trouble of exciting the actual idea, and making it as lively and clear as we can; and in this consists very much of that which we call attention of the mind in thinking. And the force or strength of a mind consists very much in an ability to excite actual ideas, so as to have them lively and clear; and in its comprehension, whereby it is able to excite several at once, to that degree as to see their connection and relations.

Here by the way, we may observe the exceeding imperfection of the HUMAN UNDERSTANDING, and one thing wherein it appears im-

mensely BELOW GOD'S UNDERSTANDING. In that he understands himself and all other things by the actual and immediate presence of an idea of the things understood. All his understanding is not only by actual ideas of things, without ever being put to it to make use of signs instead of ideas, either through an inability or difficulty of exciting those ideas, or to avoid a slow progress of thought, that would arise by so manifold and exact an attention; but he has the actual ideas of things perfectly in his mind, without the least defect of any part, and with perfect clearness, and without the imperfection of that fleetingness, or transitoriness, that attends our ideas, and without any troublesome exertion of the mind to hold the idea there, and without the trouble we are at to have in view a number at once, that we may see the relations; but has the ideas of all things at once in his mind, and all in the highest possible perfection of clearness, and all permanently, and invariably there without any transitoriness or fading in any part. Our understandings are not only subject to the imperfection, that consists in those things which necessitates us to make use of such signs as we have been speaking of, but this is a source of innumerable errors that we are subject to. Though, as was said before, such a use of signs serves as well to many purposes, yet the want of the actual ideas, and making use only of the signs instead of them, causes mankind to run into a multitude of errors, the falsity of which would be manifest to them, if the ideas themselves were present.

From what has been said, we see that there are two ways of thinking and understanding, especially of spiritual or mental things, that we receive a notion of by reflection or consciousness, viz.

1. That wherein we do not directly view the things themselves by the actual presence of their ideas, or (which is the same thing in mental matters) sensation of their resemblances, but apprehend them only indirectly in their signs, which is a kind of mental reading; wherein we do not look on the things themselves, but only on those signs of them that are before our eyes. This is a mere cogitation without any proper apprehension of the things thought of.

2. There is that which is more properly called apprehension, wherein the mind has a direct ideal view, or contemplation of the thing thought of.

This ideal apprehension or view of mental things is either:

1. Of things that pertain merely to the faculty of understanding, or what is figuratively called the head; including all the modes of mere discerning, judging, or speculation; or

2. Of things that appertain to the other faculty of the will, or what is figuratively called the heart; whereby things are pleasing or displeasing, including all agreeableness and disagreeableness, all beauty and deformity, all pleasure and pain, and all those sensations, exercises and passions of the mind that arise from either of those. An ideal apprehension

or view of things of this latter sort is what is vulgarly called having a SENSE. It is commonly said when a person has an ideal view of anything of this nature, that he has a sense of it in his mind, and it is very properly so expressed. For, by what has been said already, persons cannot have actual ideas of mental things without having those very things in the mind; and seeing all of this latter sort of mental things, that belong to the faculty of will or the heart, do, in great part at least, consist in a sensation of agreeableness or disagreeablness, or a sense or feeling of the heart, of pleasedness or displeasedness; threfore it will follow that everyone who has an ideal view of those things has therein some measure of that inward feeling or sense.

Hence arises another great distinction of the kind of understanding of mental things, or those things that appertain or relate to spiritual beings, which is somewhat diverse from the former, viz. of speculative and sensible, or

1. That understanding which consists in mere SPECULATION, or the understanding of the Head; or

2. That which consists in the SENSE OF THE HEART.

The former includes all that understanding that is without any proper ideal apprehension or view, or all understanding of mental things of either faculty, that is only by signs, and also all ideal views of things that are merely intellectual, or appertain only to the faculty of understanding; i.e. all that understanding of things, that does not consist in, or imply, some motion of the will, or in other words (to speak figuratively) some feeling of the heart, is mere speculative knowledge, whether it be an ideal apprehension of them, or no.

But all that understanding of things, that does consist in, or involve, such a sense or feeling, is not merely speculative, but sensible knowledge. So is all ideal apprehension of beauty and deformity, or loveliness and hatefulness, and all ideas of delight or comfort, and pleasure of body or mind, and pain, trouble, or misery, and all ideal apprehension of desires and longings, esteem, acquiescence, hope, fear, contempt, choosing, refusing, accepting, rejecting, loving, hating, anger, and the idea of all the affections of the mind, and all their motions and exercises, and all ideal views of dignity, or excellency of any kind, and also all ideas of terrible greatness, or awful majesty, meanness or contemptibleness, value and importance. All knowledge of this sort, as it is of things that concern the heart, or the will and affections, so it all relates to the good or evil which the sensible idea of things of this nature involves; and nothing is called a sensible knowledge upon any other account but the sense, or kind of inward testing or feeling, of sweetness or pleasure, bitterness or pain, that is implied in it, or arises from it. Yet it is not only the mere ideal apprehension of that good or evil that is included in what is called being

sensible; but also the ideal apprehensions of other things that appertain to the thing known, on which the goodness or evil that attends them depends. As for instance, some men are said to have a sense of the dreadfulness of God's displeasure. This apprehension of God's displeasure is called having a sense, and is to be looked upon as a part of sensible knowledge, because of the evil or pain in the object of God's displeasure, that is connected with that displeasure. But yet in a sense of the terribleness of God's displeasure there is implied an ideal apprehension of more things than merely of that pain or misery or sense of God's heart: there is implied an ideal apprehension of the being of God, as of some intellectual existence, and an ideal apprehension of his greatness and of the greatness of his power.

An ideal apprehension or view of these things is in vulgar speech called having a sense of them; and in proportion to the intensive degree of this ideal apprehension, or the clearness and liveliness of the idea of them, so persons are said to have a greater or less sense of them; and according to the easiness or difficulty of persons receiving such a sense of things, especially things that it much concerns them to be sensible of, are they called either sensible or stupid.

This distribution of human knowledge into speculative and sensible, though it seem to pertain to one particular kind of the objects of our knowledge, viz., those things that appertain, or relate to the will and affections; yet indeed may be extended to all the knowledge we have of all objects whatsoever. For there is no kind of thing that we know, but what may be considered as in some respect or other concerning the wills or hearts of spiritual beings. And indeed we are concerned to know nothing on any other account; so that perhaps this distribution of the kinds of our knowledge into speculative and sensible, if duly weighed, will be found the most important of all. The distribution is with respect to those properties of our knowledge that immediately relate to our wills and affections, and that in the objects of our knowledge on the account of which alone they are worthy to be known, viz., their relation to our wills and affections, and interest, as good or evil, important or otherwise, and the respect they bear to our happiness or misery.

The will, in all its determinations whatsoever, is governed by its thoughts and apprehensions of things with regard to those properties of the objects of its thoughts, wherein the degree of the sense of the heart has a main influence.

There is a two-fold division or distribution which may be made of the kinds of sensible knowledge of things that men have.

The first respects the ways we come by it.

1. There is that which is purely natural; either such as men's minds come to be impressed with, by the objects that are about them, by the laws of nature; as when they behold anything that is beautiful or de-

formed, by a beauty or deformity that men by nature are sensible of, then they have sensible knowledge of this beauty or deformity. As when the ear hears a variety of sounds harmoniously proportioned, the soul has a sensible knowledge of the excellency of the sound; so when it tastes any good or ill savour, it has a sensible knowledge of the excellency or hatefulness of that savour. So it may have a sensible knowledge of many things by memory and reflection. So a man may have a sensible apprehension of pleasure, or sorrow, that others are the subjects of, indirectly by reflection; either by exciting from the memory something that he has felt heretofore, which he supposes is like it, or by placing himself in others' circumstances, or by placing things about him in his imagination, and from ideas so put together in his mind, exciting something of a like pleasure or pain transiently in himself. Or if those ideas come so together into the mind by the senses, or by the relation of others, such a sensation will spontaneously arise in the mind. In like manner, men may have a sense of their own happiness or misery conceived as future. So men may, by mere nature, come to have a sense of the importance, or terribleness, or desirableness of many things.

2. That sense of things which we do not receive without some immediate influence of the Spirit impressing a sense of things that do concern our greatest interest on our minds. It is found very often a very difficult thing to excite a sense of temporal things in the mind, requiring great attention, and close application of thought, and many times it is not in our power. And in many instances wherein we have a sense of temporal things, that is purely natural, it depends not merely on the force of our thoughts, but on the circumstances we are in, or some special accidental situation and concurrence of things in the course of our thoughts and meditations, or some particular incident in providence that excites a sense of things, or gives an ideal view of them in a way inexplicable. But the exciting sense of things pertaining to our external interest is a thing that we are so far from, and so unable to attain of ourselves, by reason of the alienation of the inclinations and natural dispositions of the soul from those things as they are; and the sinking of our intellectual power, and the great subjection of the soul in its fallen state to the external senses that a due sense of those things is never attained without immediate divine assistance.

It is in this, that the ORDINARY WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD in the hearts of men CONSISTS, viz. in giving a sense of spiritual and eternal things, or of things that appertain to the business of religion and our external interest. The extraordinary influence of the Spirit of God in inspiration, imparts speculative knowledge to the soul; but the ordinary influence of God's Spirit communicates only a sensible knowledge of those things that the mind had a speculative knowledge of before. And an imagination that some have of speculative knowledge received from

the Spirit of God, in those that have no real inspiration, is that wherein ENTHUSIASM consists.

Secondly, the other distribution that may be made of the kinds of sensible knowledge is according to the different nature of the objects of it, into a sense of things with respect to the natural good or evil that is in them, or that they relate to; and a sense of them with respect to Spiritual good or evil. By spiritual good, I mean all true moral good, all real moral beauty and excellency, and all those acts of the will, or that sense of the heart that relates to it, and the idea of which involves it; as all relish for it and desires of it, and delight in it, and happiness consisting in it, etc.

By natural good and evil I mean all that good or evil which is agreeable or disagreeable to human nature as such, without regard to the moral disposition; as all natural beauty and deformity, such as a visible sensible proportion or disproportion in figures, sounds, and beauty of colors; any good or evil that is the object of the external senses; and all that good or evil which arises from gratifying or crossing any of the natural appetites; all that good and evil which consists in gratifying or crossing a principle of self-love, consisting in others' esteem of us, and love to us, or their hatred and contempt; and that desirableness or undesirableness of moral dispositions and actions, so far as arising from hence, and all that importance, worth or terribleness arising from a relation to this natural good or evil.

Persons are capable of some sensible knowledge of things of religion of the former sort, viz. with respect to the natural good or evil that attends them, of themselves, with the same improvement of their natural powers by which they acquire this sensible knowledge of temporal things; because this good and evil consists in an agreeableness, or disagreeableness to human nature as such, and therefore no principles are required in man beyond those that are contained in human nature to discern them, but yet by reason of the natural stupidity of the soul with respect to things, so diverse from all objects of sense, and so opposite to the natural disposition of the heart, it is found by experience that men never will obtain any very considerable sense of them without the influence of the Spirit of God assisting the faculties of human nature, and impressing a lively sense of them. But as to the other, viz. a sense of divine things with respect to spiritual good and evil, because these do not consist in any agreeableness, or disagreeableness to human nature as such, or the mere human faculties, or principles; therefore men merely with the exercise of those faculties, and their own natural strength, can do nothing towards getting such a sense of divine things, but it must be wholly and entirely a work of the Spirit of God, not merely as assisting and coworking with natural principles, but as infusing something above nature.

By the things that have been said we may see the difference between the influences of the Spirit of God on the minds of natural men in

AWAKENINGS, common CONVICTIONS, and ILLUMINATIONS, and his spiritual influences on the hearts of the saints at and after their conversion.

1. Natural men while they are senseless and unawakened, have very little sensible knowledge of the things of religion, even with respect to the natural good and evil that is in them and attends them; and indeed have very little of an ideal apprehension of any sort of divine and external things, by reason of their being left to the stupefying influence of sin and the objects of sense; but when they are awakened and convinced, the Spirit of God, by assisting their natural powers, gives them an ideal apprehension of the things of religion, with respect to what is natural in them, i.e. of that which is speculative in them, and that which pertains to a sensibleness of their natural good and evil, or all except that which involves a sense of their spiritual excellency. The Spirit of God assists them to an ideal view of God's natural perfections, wherein consists his greatness, and gives a view of this as manifested in his works that he has done, and in the words that he has spoken. And so he gives a sensible apprehension of the heinousness of sin, and his wrath against it, and the guilt of it, and the terribleness of the sufferings denounced against it; and so they have a sense of the importance of the things of religion in general. And herein consists what we commonly call conviction, and in a sense of the natural good that attends the things of religion, viz. the favor of so great a Being, his mercy as it relates to our natural good, or deliverance from natural evil, the glory of heaven with respect to the natural good that is to be enjoyed there, and the like. And herein consists those affecting, joyful common illuminations, that natural men sometimes have. In thus assisting men's faculties to an ideal apprehension of the natural things of religion, together with what assistance God may give men's natural reason and judgment to see the force of natural arguments, consists the whole of the common work of the Spirit of God in men. And it consists only in assisting natural principles without infusing anything supernatural.

2. The special work of the Spirit of God, or that which is peculiar to the Saints, consists in giving the sensible knowledge of the things of religion with respect to their spiritual good or evil; which indeed does all originally consist in a sense of the spiritual excellency, beauty, or sweetness, of divine things, which is not by assisting natural principles, but by infusing something supernatural.

The ideal apprehension and sensible knowledge of the things of religion will give that conviction of their truth or reality, which can not otherwise be obtained, and is the principal source of that CONVICTION of the TRUTH of the things of religion that is given by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God on men's hearts.

1. An ideal apprehension and sensible knowledge of the things of re-

ligion, with respect to what is natural in them, such as natural men have that are under awakenings, will give some degree of conviction of the truth of divine things further than a mere notion of them in their signs, or only a speculative apprehension of them; because by this means men are enabled to see in many instances the agreement of the declarations and threatenings of the word of God with the nature of things; which, without an ideal and sensible knowledge of them, they could not have. As for instance, they that from the tokens of God's greatness, his power and awful majesty, in his works, and in his word, have an idea or sense of that greatness, power and awful majesty, and so see the argreement between such works and such words, and such power and majesty; and therefore hence have a conviction of that truth which otherwise they could not have, viz. that it is a very great Being that made these things, and spake these things; and so from a sense they may hence have of the dreadfulness of the wrath of such a Being, they have a conviction of the truth of what the Scripture teaches about the dreadfulness of God's wrath, and of the punishment of hell. And from the sense they hereby have of the heinousness or dreadfulness of sin against such a God and the natural agreement between affronts of such a majesty and the suffering of extreme misery, it appears much more credible to them that there is indeed an extreme misery to be suffered for sin. And so a sense of the natural good that there is in the things of religion, such as is given in common illuminations makes what the scriptures declare of the blessedness of heaven, etc., to appear to them more credible.

2. An ideal and sensible apprehension of the spiritual excellency of divine things is the proper source of all SPIRITUAL CONVICTION of the truth of divine things, or that belief of their truth that there is in SAVING FAITH. There can be no saving conviction without it, and it is the great thing that mainly distinguishes saving belief, or conviction from all other; or the thing wherein its distinguishing essence does properly lie, that it has a sense of the divine or spiritual excellency of the things of religion, as that which it arises from.

All saving conviction of divine truth does most essentially arise from the spiritual sense of the excellency of divine things; yet this sense of spiritual excellency is not the only kind of ideal apprehension or sense of divine things that is concerned in such a conviction, but it also partly depends on a sensible knowledge of what is natural in religion; as this may be needful to prepare the mind for a sense of its spiritual excellency; and as such a sense of its spiritual excellency may depend upon it. For as the spiritual excellency of the things of religion itself does depend on and presuppose those things that are natural in religion, they being as it were the substratum of this spiritual excellency; so a sense, or ideal apprehension of the one depends in some measure on the ideal apprehension of

the other. Thus a sense of the excellency of God's mercy in forgiving sin depends on a sense of the great guilt of sin, the great punishment it deserves; a sense of the beauty and wonderfulness of divine grace does in great measure depend on a sense of the greatness and majesty of that being whose grace it is, and so indeed a sense of the glory of God's holiness and all his moral perfections and a sense of the excellency of Christ's salvation depends on a sense of the misery and great guilt of those who are the subjects of this salvation; and so, though a saving conviction of the truth of the things of religion does most directly and immediately depend on a sense of their spiritual excellency, yet it also in some measure and more indirectly and remotely depends on an ideal apprehension of what is natural in religion and in a common conviction.

Common conviction, or an ideal and sensible apprehension of what is natural in the things of religion, contributes to a saving conviction of the truth of the gospel especially in this way: men, by being made sensible of the great guilt of sin, or the connection or natural agreeableness there is between that and a dreadful punishment, and how that the greatness and majesty of God seems to require and demand such a punishment, are brought to see the great need of a satisfaction, or something to intervene to make it honorable to that majesty to show them favor; and being for a while blind to the suitableness of Christ's satisfaction in order to this, and then afterwards have a sense given them of Christ's divine excellency, and so the glorious dignity of his person, and what he did and suffered for sinners; hereby their eyes are as it were opened to see the perfect fitness there is in this to satisfy for sin, or to render their being received into favor consistent with the honor of God's offended majesty. The sight of this excellent congruity does very powerfully convince [them] of the truth of the gospel or that his way of satisfying for sin, which now they see to be so congruous, is certainly a real way, not a mere figment, but a divine contrivance, and that there is indeed acceptance to be had with God in this way; and so the soul savingly believes in Christ. The sight of this congruity convinces the more strongly, when at last it is seen, because the person was often told of it before, yet could see nothing of it; which convinces him that it was beyond the invention of men to discover it; for by experience they found themselves all their lifetime wholly blind to it; but now they see the perfect suitableness there is, which convinces them of the divine wisdom, totally beyond the wisdom of men, that contrived it.

The truth that the soul is most immediately convinced of, in this case, by a sense of the divine excellency of Christ, with a preparatory sense of the need of satisfaction for sin, is not that the Gospel is the Word of God; but this is the truth which the mind first and most directly feels under a conviction of, viz. that the way of salvation which the gospel reveals is a

proper, suitable and sufficient way, perfectly agreeable to reason and the nature of things, and that which tends to answer the ends proposed. And the mind being convinced of this truth, which is the great subject of the gospel, it thence naturally and immediately infers from this fitness and sufficiency of this salvation, which the mind has experienced to be so much beyond the power of human reason of itself to discern, that it is certainly a contrivance of a superhuman, excellent wisdom, holiness and justice; and therefore God's contrivance.

With Edwards, as with the later Kierkegaard, it is not simply the "whatness" of the object that is central to the issue of truth. The knowing and believing mind is by no means neutral, passively absorbing whatever comes through sensation as a sponge drinks up water. What is known or believed is also feared or loved. The experiencing subject not only receives impressions from its objective environment, but also responds. Truth is not primarily a matter of how adequate certain statements are in grasping something objective. Nor is it mere accumulated information. Rather, it is a qualitative relation of the subject to the objective world at deeply personal levels. It is marked by possible threat, or anxiety, no less than hope and confidence. Here especially Edwards anticipates both the mood and language of a Kierkegaard.

Unlike later existentialism, Edwards approaches the question of truth more from the side of the object. We shall see presently how Kierkegaard came to define truth as "subjectivity." There the emphasis is again upon passionate decision in the face of objective uncertainty, as we saw in Part I. Edwards develops instead what might be called a view of truth as "objectivity." He shows how an object of sense experience can shape life by pointing beyond itself to God's all-inclusive truth and beauty. This is why he defines the "truth of faith" as an affair of the "heart."

Here the nature of true faith and "true virtue" merge.[8] In the life of faith the object brings to consciousness the beauty of Being in general, and is itself perceived in the light of God's Being. The object may bring a response of kindliness and steady good will, appropriate to the vision of all experience as the living sign of God's power and radiance. Virtue is a fundamental attitude of benevolence toward particular beings in the light of Being. Stated in more biblical terms, it is the disposition of faith to love the world and the neighbor in terms of the love of God, which is already given us.

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[8] See Edwards' *The Nature of True Virtue,* one of his better-known writings.

3. Friedrich Schleiermacher

1781-1834

(*For biographical notes and brief bibliography, see p. 58.*)

"Faith is nothing other than the incipient experience of the satisfaction of . . . spiritual need by Christ."

Accepting Descartes' famous dictum (I think, therefore I am) as a starting point, Friedrich Schleiermacher two centuries later developed what might be called a phenomenology of human consciousness. But we must not allow the similar focus of these two thinkers to blind us to their diversity. Schleiermacher is in line with modern feeling, and far clearer than Descartes, on the fact that the main given element of life in this world is not the self, but the self-world polarity. The lonely Cartesian ego, without certainty of the world around it, would be for Schleiermacher simply an "indefinite 'agility' without form or colour." Consciousness, he realizes, is definitely *of* something, and thus inextricably tied in with the "other." The difference between subject and object arises out of, and also has fulfillment in, prior unities.

Schleiermacher approaches the subject in terms of "grades of consciousness." There is the "confused, animal grade" which comes even before subject-object awareness. So one may say that the unformed is prior to the formed, the undifferentiated to the differentiated, and general consciousness comes before self-consciousness. At this first level there is no difference between perception and feeling, between internal and external. It represents potential as compared with actualized human existence.

"Sensible self-consciousness" is the second grade. By this use of the word "sensible" to refer to *sense* or *sensory*, Schleiermacher pinpoints the place where awareness of subject-object difference emerges. Here we see a reciprocity between dependence and freedom, the receptive and the spontaneously active. There is always give-and-take, influence and counterinfluence, separation and relationship, between the subject and the "corresponding other—" i.e., between the subject and its object. Man's awareness of the world, whether in remembered clusters of experience or single instances, is always in terms of this mixed self- and other-consciousness.

"God-consciousness" or the "feeling of absolute dependence" comes into certain moments of sensory self-consciousness, and into the interplay between subject and object at that level. But it is never reducible to a qualitative content or exhausted in that way. It pervades all our receptivity and our spontaneous activity with the awareness that our freedom

is a gift from outside. In it the subject-object contrast, with its mixture of freedom and dependence, is broken up in the primal awareness of total dependence.

The "truth of faith" has its context and meaning at this level. Truth is not principally a matter of adequate statements, measured by a knowing subject set off from its object. Receptivity is absolutely essential to the knowing process. Our knowledge of God springs out of life, out of the awareness that life—the totality of life—is grounded in a primordial something under and beyond itself.

Thus Schleiermacher anticipates current efforts to conceive of God as "beyond God" or in nonobjectifying ways. To speak of God as an "object," however fitting in analogy, is to imply that He is one object among many. It suggests that God Himself stands somewhere within the polarity of receptiveness and activity, freedom and dependence.[1] But God is the *Whence* of our whole life, both active and receptive—indeed, of the totality of finite and temporal being. He is its fundamental "ground."

We must clear that "God-consciousness" and "sensible self-consciousness" interpenetrate each other. Neither can be reduced to or divorced from the other. They are neither divisible nor fused. Again we may paraphrase Kant, to the effect that "consciousness of absolute dependence without sensible self-consciousness is empty; while sensible self-consciousness without the feeling of absolute dependence is blind." Schleiermacher says it thus: ". . . to the man who once recognizes what piety is, and appropriates it as a requirement of his being, every moment of a merely sensible self-consciousness is a defective and imperfect state. But even if the feeling of absolute dependence in general were the entire content of a moment of self-consciousness, this also would be an imperfect state; for it would lack the definiteness and clearness which spring from its being related to the determination of the sensible self-consciousness."[2]

In the following selection Schleiermacher begins by pointing out that our consciousness of self is never simply of a fixed, unwavering identity. We are always aware also of an element of transition that we are in the midst of. He sees two aspects in self-consciousness, therefore. One we might call "self-caused" and the other not. One is our own being, while

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[1] Not for nothing do the Hindu scriptures speak of God as "beyond the opposites." This Hegelian type of reasoning has reappeared quite regularly in contemporary statements. For instance, Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), *passim,* argues that man, in his search for reality and meaning, cannot accept as the ultimate answer any principle which can be made an "object" of knowledge, since the moment it is made an object, he as "subject" stands outside it and the process of search continues.

[2] *The Christian Faith,* H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, eds. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), pp. 21 f.

the second comes about somehow or other, we hardly know how. Beside our central ego there is always another factor, from which we never get away. It seems to involve our particular condition at the moment. Thus in our consciousness of self we are aware of our self (or identity) and also of "coexistence with an Other."

Phases of our experience corresponding to these two elements are activity and receptivity. If we could dismiss the "Other" from our awareness, we would have no reason for a sense of receptivity. Our self would be all spontaneous action. Indeed, if we were unaware of any object or "otherness" in our world, action itself could only be expressed in the mere "indefinite 'agility'" mentioned earlier. For our action has no aim except by means of previous receptive experience.

The trait of all self-consciousness that is mainly receptive is a feeling of dependence, while the general element in our sense of self in action is a feeling of freedom. Self-consciousness also involves reciprocity, however. Freedom and dependence intermingle in relation to an object. Thus self-consciousness, Schleiermacher points out, is really a series of moments involving interplay between freedom and dependence. There is never a feeling of absolute freedom; to try to assert it is to deceive oneself. Nor can there be absolute dependence in relation to a particular object, for toward every object we have some sort of sense of freedom. But since our freedom itself—all our spontaneous activity—depends on a source outside us, and our self-consciousness in the midst of such activity never ceases as long as we live, our feeling may be called that of absolute dependence.

Now, is this related to God? It is, in the sense that both phases of our existence, active and receptive, come from God. This does not mean that the great *Whence* is the same as the world, either in its totality or in any part. We ourselves are parts of the world, which in turn we influence and toward which we have a feeling of limited freedom and also limited dependence. But the sense of absolute dependence does not refer to the world, or indeed to any previously informed notion of God.

Here Schleiermacher disposes of concepts of God that contradict his definition. He goes on to show that the first thing we can know of God is this element in consciousness which is codetermining with ourselves, to which we trace our condition. Feeling oneself absolutely dependent and being in relation with God are one and the same, for a very simple reason. Absolute dependence is the fundamental relation which must include all others. We cannot know God in any other way, for to know God as object is to suppose Him exposed to our influence, and this leads presently into forms of corruption and idolatry.

There follows a fairly prolonged discussion of animal consciousness, together with that of primitive man and young children. The writer imag-

ines how the elements of developed human consciousness emerged from an earlier typical confusion and vagueness. His analysis produces, as we have already seen, three levels or grades of self-consciousness. The highest of these contains no changeable element but remains "self-identical while all other states are changing." As a consciousness of absolute dependence it is "quite simple." It coexists with the "sensible" or sensory self-consciousness, the middle grade, and in reciprocal relation with it. Each is incomplete without the other. The highest point of self-consciousness is where—and when—the two kinds of consciousness are fully present in the unity of the moment.

Described "from below": when sensory consciousness has driven out animal confusion a higher tendency appears, as against the subject-object antithesis. This is expressed in the sense of absolute dependence. The more this attitude is taken in the midst of the subject's other division of consciousness, the more truly religious he is. Described "from above": this highest tendency, leading to a feeling of absolute dependence, is original and innate and always tries to break through into man's life. But it cannot, so long as the "antithesis" remains dissolved in animal confusion.

"Sensible" self-consciousness varies from moment to moment with our state and activities. The sense of dependence, of itself wholly steady, varies with it, conditioning the moment. But it is always a moment of higher power. Schleiermacher goes on to examine the pleasure-pain antithesis in relation to freedom and dependence. (The two do not exactly correspond as unperceptive people are apt to think.) And he explores its relation to religious consciousness, which may have an element of either one or both. The higher form takes precedence over the lower. Thus we may have a personal sorrow, but if we truly trust God that will be still deeper for us, somehow akin to joy. Or we may lose religious consciousness for a time. And that will be a loss more serious to us than the gain of personal joys.

The writer then shows the stages of what happens as religious life becomes habitual, and what sort of sequence of emotions and experience we may expect from it. In a Postscript he deals with those who cannot believe true God-consciousness to involve feeling, or the feeling to come from God.

The following selection is again taken from Chapter I of the Introduction to *The Christian Faith,* a work compiled as a dogmatics for the proposed union of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, which Schleiermacher supported. With old-fashioned multiplicity of titles the chapter is called "The Definition of Dogmatics," under which subhead I is "The Conception of the Church: Propositions Borrowed from Ethics." The

titles of the two consecutive sections of our excerpt are as reproduced below.

(From Friedrich Schleiermacher, "... The Consciousness of Being Absolutely Dependent . . . ," and ". . . The Highest Grade of Human Self-Consciousness . . . ," *The Christian Faith,* H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, eds. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956], §§4 and 5, pp. 12–26. The single footnote is from the editors.)

§4. THE COMMON ELEMENT IN ALL HOWSOEVER DIVERSE EXPRESSIONS OF PIETY, BY WHICH THESE ARE CONJOINTLY DISTINGUISHED FROM ALL OTHER FEELINGS, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, THE SELF-IDENTICAL ESSENCE OF PIETY, IS THIS: THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF BEING ABSOLUTELY DEPENDENT, OR, WHICH IS THE SAME THING, OF BEING IN RELATION WITH GOD.

NOTE.—For the word *schlechthinig* [translated 'absolute'], which occurs frequently in the following exposition, I am indebted to Professor Delbruck. I was unwilling to venture upon its use, and I am not aware that it has occurred anywhere else. But now that he has given it me, I find it very convenient to follow his lead in using it.

1. In any actual state of consciousness, no matter whether it merely accompanies a thought or action or occupies a moment for itself, we are never simply conscious of our Selves in their unchanging identity, but are always at the same time conscious of a changing determination of them. The Ego in itself can be represented objectively; but every consciousness of self is at the same time the consciousness of a variable state of being. But in this distinction of the latter from the former, it is implied that the variable does not proceed purely from the self-identical, for in that case it could not be distinguished from it. Thus in every self-consciousness there are two elements, which we might call respectively a self-caused element *(ein Sichselbstsetzen)* and a non-self-caused element *(ein Sichselbstnichtsogesetzthaben);* or a Being and a Having-by-some-means-come-to-be *(ein Sein und ein Irgendwiegewordensein).* The latter of these presupposes for every self-consciousness another factor besides the Ego, a factor which is the source of the particular determination, and without which the self-consciousness would not be precisely what it is. But this Other is not objectively presented in the immediate self-consciousness with which alone we are here concerned. For though, of course, the double constitution of self-consciousness causes us always to look objectively for an Other to which we can trace the origin of our particular state, yet this search is a separate act with which we are not at present concerned. In self-consciousness there are only two elements: the one expresses the existence of the subject for itself, the other its co-existence with an Other.

Now to these two elements, as they exist together in the temporal self-consciousness, correspond in the subject its *Receptivity* and its (spontaneous) *Activity*. If we could think away the co-existence with an Other, but otherwise think ourselves as we are, then a self-consciousness which predominantly expressed an affective condition of receptivity would be impossible, and any self-consciousness could then express only activity—an activity, however, which, not being directed to any object, would be merely an urge outwards, an indefinite 'agility' without form or colour. But as we never do exist except along with an Other, so even in every outward-tending self-consciousness the element of receptivity, in some way or other affected, is the primary one; and even the self-consciousness which accompanies an action (acts of knowing included), while it predominantly expresses spontaneous movement and activity, is always related (though the relation is often a quite indefinite one) to a prior moment of affective receptivity, through which the original 'agility' re-received its direction. To these propositions assent can be unconditionally demanded; and no one will deny them who is capable of a little introspection and can find interest in the real subject of our present inquiries.

2. The common element in all those determinations of self-consciousness which predominantly express a receptivity affected from some outside quarter is the *feeling of Dependence*. On the other hand, the common element in all those determinations which predominantly express spontaneous movement and activity is the *feeling of Freedom*. The former is the case not only because it is by an influence from some other quarter that we have come to such a state, but particularly because we *could* not so become except by means of an Other. The latter is the case because in these instances an Other is determined by us, and without our spontaneous activity could not be so determined. These two definitions may, indeed, seem to be still incomplete, inasmuch as there is also a mobility of the subject which is not connected with an Other at all, but which seems to be subject to the same antithesis as that just explained. But when we become such-and-such from within outwards, for ourselves, without any Other being involved, that is the simple situation of the temporal development of a being which remains essentially self-identical, and it is only very improperly that this can be referred to the concept 'Freedom.' And when we cannot ourselves, from within outwards, become such-and-such, this only indicates the limits which belong to the nature of the subject itself as regards spontaneous activity, and this could only very improperly be called 'Dependence.'

Further, this antithesis must on no account be confused with the antithesis between gloomy or depressing and elevating or joyful feelings, of which we shall speak later. For a feeling of dependence may be elevating, if the 'having-become-such-and-such' which it expresses is complete; and

similarly a feeling of freedom may be dejecting, if the moment of predominating receptivity to which the action can be traced was of a dejecting nature, or again if the manner and method of the activity prove to be a disadvantageous combination.

Let us now think of the feeling of dependence and the feeling of freedom as *one*, in the sense that not only the subject but the corresponding Other is the same for both. Then the total self-consciousness made up of both together is one of *Reciprocity* between the subject and the corresponding Other. Now let us suppose the totality of all moments of feeling, of both kinds, as one whole: then the corresponding Other is also to be supposed as a totality or as one, and then that term 'reciprocity' is the right one for our self-consciousness in general, inasmuch as it expresses our connexion with everything which either appeals to our receptivity or is subjected to our activity. And this is true not only when we particularize this Other and ascribe to each of its elements a different degree of relation to the twofold consciousness within us, but also when we think of the total 'outside' as one, and moreover (since it contains other receptivities and activities to which we have a relation) as one together with ourselves, that is, as a *World*. Accordingly our self-consciousness, as a consciousness of our existence in the world or of our co-existence with the world, is a series in which the feeling of freedom and the feeling of dependence are divided. But neither an absolute feeling of dependence, *i.e.* without any feeling of freedom in relation to the co-determinant, nor an absolute feeling of freedom, *i.e.* without any feeling of dependence in relation to the co-determinant, is to be found in this whole realm. If we consider our relations to Nature, or those which exist in human society, there we shall find a large number of objects in regard to which freedom and dependence maintain very much of an equipoise: these constitute the field of equal reciprocity. There are other objects which exercise a far greater influence upon our receptivity than our activity exercises upon them, and also *vice versa*, so that one of the two may diminish until it is imperceptible. But neither of the two members will ever completely disappear. The feeling of dependence predominates in the relation of children to their parents, or of citizens to their fatherland; and yet individuals can, without losing their relationship, exercise upon their fatherland not only a directive influence, but even a counter-influence. And the dependence of children on their parents, which very soon comes to be felt as a gradually diminishing and fading quality, is never from the start free from the admixture of an element of spontaneous activity towards the parents: just as even in the most absolute autocracy the ruler is not without some slight feeling of dependence. It is the same in the case of Nature: towards all the forces of Nature—even, we may say, towards the heavenly bodies—we ourselves do, in the same

sense in which they influence us, exercise a counter-influence, however minute. So that our whole self-consciousness in relation to the World or its individual parts remains enclosed within these limits.

3. There can, accordingly, be for us no such thing as a feeling of absolute freedom. He who asserts that he has such a feeling is either deceiving himself or separating things which essentially belong together. For if the feeling of freedom expresses a forthgoing activity, this activity must have an object which has been somehow given to us, and this could not have taken place without an influence of the object upon our receptivity. Therefore in every such case there is involved a feeling of dependence which goes along with the feeling of freedom, and thus limits it. The contrary could only be possible if the object altogether came into existence through our activity, which is never the case absolutely, but only relatively. But if, on the other hand, the feeling of freedom expresses only an inward movement of activity, not only is every such individual movement bound up with the state of our stimulated receptivity at the moment, but, further, the totality of our free inward movements, considered as a unity, cannot be represented as a feeling of absolute freedom, because our whole existence does not present itself to our consciousness as having proceeded from our own spontaneous activity. Therefore in any temporal existence a feeling of absolute freedom can have no place. As regards the feeling of absolute dependence which, on the other hand, our proposition does postulate for just the same reason, this feeling cannot in any wise arise from the influence of an object which has in some way to be *given* to us; for upon such an object there would always be a counter-influence, and even a voluntary renunciation of this would always involve a feeling of freedom. Hence a feeling of absolute dependence, strictly speaking, cannot exist in a single moment as such, because such a moment is always determined, as regards its total content, by what is *given,* and thus by objects towards which we have a feeling of freedom. But the self-consciousness which accompanies all our activity, and therefore, since that is never zero, accompanies our whole existence, and negatives absolute freedom, is itself precisely a consciousness of absolute dependence; for it is the consciousness that the whole of our spontaneous activity comes from a source outside of us in just the same sense in which anything towards which we should have a feeling of absolute freedom must have proceeded entirely from ourselves. But without any feeling of freedom a feeling of absolute dependence would not be possible.

4. As regards the identification of absolute dependence with 'relation to God' in our proposition: this is to be understood in the sense that the *Whence* of our receptive and active existence, as implied in this self-consciousness, is to be designated by the word 'God,' and that this is for us the really original signification of that word. In this connexion we have

first of all to remind ourselves that, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, this 'Whence' is not the world, in the sense of the totality of temporal existence, and still less is it any single part of the world. For we have a feeling of freedom (though, indeed, a limited one) in relation to the world, since we are complementary parts of it, and also since we are continually exercising an influence on its individual parts; and, moreover, there is the possibility of our exercising influence on all its parts; and while this does permit a limited feeling of dependence, it excludes the absolute feeling. In the next place, we have to note that our proposition is intended to oppose the view that this feeling of dependence is itself conditioned by some previous knowledge about God. And this may indeed be the more necessary since many people claim to be in the sure possession of a concept of God, altogether a matter of conception and original, *i.e.* independent of any feeling; and in the strength of this higher self-consciousness, which indeed may come pretty near to being a feeling of absolute freedom, they put far from them, as something almost infra-human, that very feeling which for us is the basic type of all piety. Now our proposition is in no wise intended to dispute the existence of such an original knowledge, but simply to set it aside as something with which, in a system of Christian doctrine, we could never have any concern, because plainly enough it has itself nothing to do directly with piety. If, however, word and idea are always originally one, and the term 'God' therefore presupposes an idea, then we shall simply say that this idea, which is nothing more than the expression of the feeling of absolute dependence, is the most direct reflection upon it and the most original idea with which we are here concerned, and is quite independent of that original knowledge (properly so called), and conditioned only by our feeling of absolute dependence. So that in the first instance God signifies for us simply that which is the codeterminant in this feeling and to which we trace our being in such a state; and any further content of the idea must be evolved out of this fundamental import assigned to it. Now this is just what is principally meant by the formula which says that to feel oneself absolutely dependent and to be conscious of being in relation with God are one and the same thing; and the reason is that absolute dependence is the fundamental relation which must include all others in itself. This last expression includes the God-consciousness in the self-consciousness in such a way that, quite in accordance with the above analysis, the two cannot be separated from each other. The feeling of absolute dependence becomes a clear self-consciousness only as this idea comes simultaneously into being. In this sense it can indeed be said that God is given to us in feeling in an original way; and if we speak of an original revelation of God to man or in man, the meaning will always be just this, that, along with the absolute dependence which character-

izes not only man but all temporal existence, there is given to man also the immediate self-consciousness of it, which becomes a consciousness of God. In whatever measure this actually takes place during the course of a personality through time, in just that measure do we ascribe piety to the individual. On the other hand, any possibility of God being in any way *given* is entirely excluded, because anything that is outwardly given must be given as an object exposed to our counter-influence, however slight this may be. The transference of the idea of God to any perceptible object, unless one is all the time conscious that it is a piece of purely arbitrary symbolism, is always a corruption, whether it be a temporary transference, *i.e.* a theophany, or a constitutive transference, in which God is represented as permanently a particular perceptible existence.

§5. WHAT WE HAVE THUS DESCRIBED CONSTITUTES THE HIGHEST GRADE OF HUMAN SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS; BUT IN ITS ACTUAL OCCURRENCE IT IS NEVER SEPARATED FROM THE LOWER, AND THROUGH ITS COMBINATION THEREWITH IN A SINGLE MOMENT IT PARTICIPATES IN THE ANTITHESIS OF THE PLEASANT AND THE UNPLEASANT.

1. The relation between these two forms of self-consciousness, namely the feeling of absolute dependence and the self-consciousness which, as expressing the connexion with perceptible finite existence, splits up into a partial feeling of dependence and a partial feeling of freedom, will best be seen if we bring in yet a third form. If we go back to the first obscure period of the life of man, we find there, all over, the animal life almost solely predominating, and the spiritual life as yet entirely in the background; and so we must regard the state of his consciousness as closely akin to that of the lower animals. It is true, indeed, that the animal state is to us really entirely strange and unknown. But there is general agreement that, on the one hand, the lower animals have no knowledge, properly so called, nor any full self-consciousness which combines the different moments into a stable unity, and that, on the other hand, they are nevertheless not entirely devoid of consciousness. Now we can hardly do justice to this state of affairs except by postulating a consciousness of such a sort that in it the objective and the introversive, or feeling and perception, are not really distinct from each other, but remain in a state of unresolved confusion. The consciousness of children obviously approximates to this form, especially before they learn to speak. From that time on, this condition tends more and more to disappear, confining itself to those dreamy moments which form the transition between sleep and waking; while in our wide-awake hours feeling and perception are clearly distinct from each other, and thus make up the whole wealth of man's sensible life, in the widest sense of the term. In that term we include (speaking

simply of the consciousness, and leaving out action proper), on the one hand, the gradual accumulation of perceptions which constitute the whole field of experience in the widest sense of the word, and, on the other hand, all determinations of self-consciousness which develop from our relations to nature and to man, including those which we described above (§4,2) as coming nearest to the feeling of absolute dependence; so that by the word 'sensible' we understand the social and moral feelings no less than the self-regarding, since they all together have their place in that realm of the particular which is subject to the abovementioned antithesis. The former division [*i.e.* the accumulation of perceptions] which belongs to the objective consciousness, we pass over, as it does not concern us here. But in the whole of the latter class, consisting of feelings which we have designated sensible, the corresponding co-determinant to which we trace the constitution of the present state belongs to the realm of reciprocal action; so that, whether we are at the moment more conscious of dependence or of freedom, we take up towards it, in a sense, an attitude of equal co-ordination, and indeed set ourselves as individuals (or as comprised within a larger individual, as, e.g., in our patriotic feelings) over against it as another individual. Now it is in this respect that these feelings are most definitely distinguished from the feeling of absolute dependence. For while the latter from its very nature negatives absolute freedom (§4,3), though it does it under the form of self-consciousness, this is not the consciousness of ourselves as individuals of a particular description, but simply of ourselves as individual finite existence in general; so that we do not set ourselves over against any other individual being, but, on the contrary, all antithesis between one individual and another is in this case done away. Hence there seems to be no objection to our distinguishing three grades of self-consciousness: the confused animal grade, in which the antithesis cannot arise, as the lowest; the sensible self-consciousness, which rests entirely upon the antithesis, as the middle; and the feeling of absolute dependence, in which the antithesis again disappears and the subject unites and identifies itself with everything which, in the middle grade, was set over against it, as the highest.

2. If there did exist a feeling of absolute freedom, in it also the above antithesis would be done away. Only, such a subject could never stand in any relation with other similarly constituted subjects, but whatever is given to it must be given as purely susceptible or passive material. And since, for this reason alone, such a feeling is never found in man, the only immediate self-consciousness in man on that grade is the feeling of absolute dependence which we have described. For every moment which is made up of a partial feeling of freedom and a partial feeling of dependence places us in a position of co-ordinate antithesis to a similar Other. But

now there remains the question, whether there exists any other self-consciousness, not immediate but accompanying some kind of knowledge or action as such, which can be ranked along with that which we have described. Let us then conceive, as the act or state of an individual, a highest kind of knowledge in which all subordinate knowledge is comprised. This, indeed, in its province is likewise elevated above all antithesis. But its province is that of the objective consciousness. However, it will of course be accomplished by an immediate self-consciousness expressive of certainty or conviction. But since this concerns the relation of the subject as knower to the known as object, even this self-consciousness which accompanies the highest knowledge remains in the realm of the antithesis. In the same way, let us conceive a highest kind of action, in the form of a resolve which covers the whole field of our spontaneous activity, so that all subsequent resolves are developed out of it, as individual parts,[1] which were already contained in it. This also in its province stands above all antithesis, and it is likewise accompanied by a self-consciousness. But this also concerns the relation of the subject as agent to that which may be the object of its action, and thus has its place within the antithesis. And since obviously this must be equally true of every self-consciousness which accompanies any particular knowledge or action, it follows that there is no other self-consciousness which is elevated above the antithesis, and that this character belongs exclusively to the feeling of absolute dependence.

3. While the lowest or animal grade of consciousness gradually disappears as the middle grade develops, the highest cannot develop at all so long as the lowest is present; but, on the other hand, the middle grade must persist undiminished even when the highest has reached its perfect development. The highest self-consciousness is in no wise dependent on outwardly given objects which may affect us at one moment and not at another. As a consciousness of absolute dependence it is quite simple, and remains self-identical while all other states are changing. Therefore, in itself it cannot possibly be at one moment thus and at another moment otherwise, nor can it by intermission be present at one moment and absent at another. Either it is not there at all, or, so long as it is there, it is continuously there and always self-identical. Now if it were impossible for it to co-exist with the consciousness of the second grade (as it cannot with that of the third), then either it could never make an appearance in time, but would always remain in the concealment in which it lay during the predominance of the lowest grade, or it must drive out the second and exist alone, and, indeed, in ever unchanging identity. Now this latter supposition is controverted by all experience, and indeed is manifestly

[1] See *Ueber die Behandlung des Pflichtbegriffs,* 1824, pp. 4–6.

impossible unless our ideation and action are to be entirely stripped of self-consciousness, which would irrevocably destroy the coherence of our existence for our own minds. It is impossible to claim a constancy for the highest self-consciousness, except on the supposition that the sensible self-consciousness is always conjoined with it. Of course, this conjunction cannot be regarded as a fusion of the two: that would be entirely opposed to the conception of both of them which we have established. It means rather a co-existence of the two in the same moment, which, of course, unless the Ego is to be split up, involves a reciprocal relation of the two. It is impossible for anyone to be in some moments exclusively conscious of his relations within the realm of the antithesis, and in other moments of his absolute dependence in itself and in a general way; for it is as a person determined for this moment in a particular manner within the realm of the antithesis that he is conscious of his absolute dependence. This relatedness of the sensibly determined to the higher self-consciousness in the unity of the moment is the consummating point of the self-consciousness. For to the man who once recognizes what piety is, and appropriates it as a requirement of his being, every moment of a merely sensible self-consciousness is a defective and imperfect state. But even if the feeling of absolute dependence in general were the entire content of a moment of self-consciousness, this also would be an imperfect state; for it would lack the definiteness and clearness which sprang from its being related to the determination of the sensible self-consciousness. This consummation, however, since it consists in the two elements being related to each other, may be described in two different ways. Described from below it is as follows: when the sensible self-consciousness has quite expelled the animal confusion, then there is disclosed a higher tendency over against the antithesis, and the expression of this tendency in the self-consciousness is the feeling of absolute dependence. And the more the subject, in each moment of sensible self-consciousness, with his partial freedom and partial dependence, takes at the same time the attitude of absolute dependence, the more religious is he. Described from above it is as follows: the tendency which we have described, as an original and innate tendency of the human soul, strives from the very beginning to break through into consciousness. But it is unable to do so as long as the antithesis remains dissolved in the animal confusion. Subsequently, however, it asserts itself. And the more it contributes to every moment of sensibly determined self-consciousness without the omission of any, so that the man, while he always feels himself partially free and partially dependent in relation to other finite existence, feels himself at the same time to be also (along with everything towards which he had that former feeling) absolutely dependent—the more religious is he.

4. The sensibly determined self-consciousness splits up of itself, in ac-

cordance with its nature, into a series of moments that differ in their content, because our activity exercised upon other beings is a temporal one, and their influence upon us is likewise temporal. The feeling of absolute dependence, on the other hand, being in itself always self-identical, would not evoke a series of thus distinguishable moments; and if it did not enter into relation with such a series in the manner described above, either it could never become an actual consciousness in time at all, or else it must accompany the sensible self-consciousness monotonously without any relation to the manifold rising and falling variations of the latter. But, as a matter of fact, our religious consciousness does not take either of these forms, but conforms to the description we have given above. That is to say: being related as a constituent factor to a given moment of consciousness which consists of a partial feeling of freedom and a partial feeling of dependence, it thereby becomes a particular religious emotion, and being in another moment related to a different datum, it becomes a different religious emotion; yet so that the essential element, namely, the feeling of absolute dependence, is the same in both, and thus throughout the whole series, and the difference arises simply from the fact that it becomes a different moment when it goes along with a different determination of the sensible self-consciousness. It remains always, however, a moment of the higher power; whereas, where there is no piety at all, the sensible self-consciousness breaks up (as was likewise described) into a series of moments of the lower power, while in the period of animal confusion there does not even take place a definite separation and antithesis of the moments for the subject.

It is the same with the second part of our proposition. That is to say: the sensible self-consciousness splits up also, of itself and from its very nature, into the antithesis of the pleasant and the unpleasant, or of pleasure and pain. This does not mean that the partial feeling of freedom is always pleasure, and the partial feeling of dependence always pain, as seems to be assumed by those who wrongly think that the feeling of absolute dependence has, of its very nature, a depressing effect. For the child can have a feeling of perfect well-being in the consciousness of dependence on its parents, and so also (thank God) can the subject in his relation to the government; and other people, even parents and governments, can feel miserable in the consciousness of their freedom. So that each may equally well be either pleasure or pain, according to whether life is furthered or hindered by it. The higher self-consciousness, on the other hand, bears within it no such antithesis. Its first appearance means, of course, an enhancement of life, if a comparison arises with the isolated sensible self-consciousness. But if, without any such reference, we think of it in its own self-identity, its effect is simply an unchanging identity of life, which excludes any such antithesis. This state we speak of under the

name of the Blessedness of the finite being as the highest summit of his perfection. But our religious consciousness, as we actually find it, is not of that character, but is subject to variation, some pious emotions approximating more to joy, and others to sorrow. Thus this antithesis refers simply to the manner in which the two grades of self-consciousness are related to each other in the unity of the moment. And thus it is by no means the case that the pleasant and the unpleasant, which exist in the sensible feeling, impart the same character to the feeling of absolute dependence. On the contrary, we often find, united in one and the same moment (as a clear sign that the two grades are not fused into each other or neutralized by each other so as to become a third) a sorrow of the lower and a joy of the higher self-consciousness; as, *e.g.*, whenever with a feeling of suffering there is combined a trust in God. But the antithesis attaches to the higher self-consciousness, because it is the nature of the latter to become temporal, to manifest itself in time, by entering into relation with the sensible self-consciousness so as to constitute a moment. That is to say: as the emergence of this higher self-consciousness at all means an enhancement of life, so whenever it emerges *with ease*, to enter into relation with a sensible determination, whether pleasant or unpleasant, this means an easy progress of that higher life, and bears, by comparison, the stamp of joy. And as the disappearance of the higher consciousness, if it could be perceived, would mean a diminution of life, so whenever it emerges *with difficulty*, this approximates to an absence of it, and can only be felt as an inhibition of the higher life.

Now this alteration undeniably forms the feeling-content of every religious life, so that it seemed superfluous to illustrate these formulae by examples. But we may now go on to ask how this usual course of the religious life is related to that which we have at an earlier point described, if only problematically, as the highest development of it. Suppose that the opposite characters are both continuously being strongly imprinted upon the individual religious emotions, so that both alternately rise to a passionate level: this gives to the religious life an instability which we cannot regard as of the highest worth. But suppose that the difficulties gradually disappear, so that facility of religious emotions becomes a permanent state; and that gradually the higher grade of feeling comes to preponderate over the lower, so that in the immediate self-consciousness the sensible determination asserts itself rather as an opportunity for the appearance of the feeling of absolute dependence than as continuing the antithesis, which is therefore transferred into the realm of mere perception: then this fact, that the antithesis has almost disappeared again from the higher grade of life, indisputably means that the latter has attained its richest content of feeling.

5. From the above it follows directly that (and in what sense) an

uninterrupted sequence of religious emotions can be required of us, as indeed Scripture actually requires it; and it is confirmed every time a religious soul laments over a moment of his life which is quite empty of the consciousness of God (since no one laments the absence of anything which is recognized to be impossible). Of course, it goes without saying in this connexion that the feeling of absolute dependence, when it unites with a sensibly determined self-consciousness, and thus becomes an emotion, must vary as regards strength. Indeed, there will naturally be moments in which a man is not directly and definitely conscious of such a feeling at all. And yet, indirectly, it can be shown that in these moments the feeling was not dead; as, *e.g.*, when such a moment is followed by another in which the feeling strongly asserts itself, while the second is not felt to be of a different character from the first or a definite departure from it, but to be linked up with it tranquilly as a continuation of its essentially unchanged identity (which is not the case when the preceding moment was one from which the feeling was definitely excluded). Also, of course, the different formations assumed by the sensible self-consciousness in virtue of the highly manifold minglings of the feeling of freedom and the feeling of dependence, differ in the degree in which they evoke or encourage the appearance of the higher self-consciousness; and in the case of those which do it in a lesser degree, a weaker appearance of the higher need not be felt as an inhibition of the higher life. But there is no determination of the immediate sensible self-consciousness which is incompatible with the higher; so that there is no kind of necessity for either of the two ever to be interrupted, except when the confused state of consciousness gains ground, and both retire behind it.

Postscript.—If thus the direct inward expression of the feeling of absolute dependence is the consciousness of God, and that feeling, whenever it attains to a certain clearness, is accompanied by such an expression, but is also combined with, and related to, a sensible self-consciousness: then the God-consciousness which has in this way arisen will, in all its particular formations, carry with it such determinations as belong to the realm of the antithesis in which the sensible self-consciousness moves. And this is the source of all those anthropomorphic elements which are inevitable in this realm in utterances about God, and which form such a cardinal point in the ever-recurring controversy between those who accept that fundamental assumption and those who deny it. For those who rejoice in the possession of an original idea of the Supreme Being derived from some other quarter, but who have no experience of piety, will not tolerate the statement that the expression of that feeling posits the action of the very same thing which is expressed in their original idea. They assert that the God of feeling is a mere fiction, an idol, and they may perhaps even hint that such a fancy is more tenable in the form of polythe-

ism. And those who will not admit either a conception of God or a feeling which represents Him, base their position on the contention that the representation of God which is put together out of such utterances, in which God appears as human, destroys itself. Meanwhile, religious men know that it is only in speech that they cannot avoid the anthropomorphic: in their immediate consciousness they keep the object separate from its mode of representation, and they endeavour to show their opponents that without this integration of feeling no certainty is possible even for the strongest forms of objective consciousness or of transitive action, and that, to be consistent, they must limit themselves entirely to the lower grade of life.

By contrast to contemporary feeling, for Schleiermacher "piety" and "religion" are quite realistic options. Piety is not a matter simply of devout or moral standards. Nor is it an addition to, or a substitute for, human life in the world. The sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular, cannot be withdrawn from each other. The "relation to God" which is the essence of piety has its reality in concrete experience.

Similarly, Schleiermacher would feel no need to argue for a "religionless Christianity" on the grounds that religion refers to some sort of separate and thus irrelevant holiness.[3] Religion is the "self-identical moment" that should inform every detailed aspect of "sensible" self-consciousness. Nor would Schleiermacher understand a view that defines religion solely in terms of man's efforts to construct a "God" of his own devising. This may be a tendency at times, as in idolatry or even polytheism. But in the prophetic monotheism of Christianity, with its focus upon redemption in Jesus of Nazareth, God-consciousness is "received," not grasped at or constructed. It is "given." Not as one more object to the knowing subject, but as a primal awareness underlying and sustaining every subject-object difference and perception. It is the feeling of absolute dependence permeating all our freedom.

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[3] This has become a much-discussed subject. For a readable survey and balanced analysis see Daniel Jenkins, *Beyond Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962).

4. Soren Kierkegaard

1813-1855

(*For biographical notes and brief bibliography, see p. 82.*)

"What is the truth but to live for an idea."—Inscription on the centenary memorial to Kierkegaard at Gilbjerg Head on the coast of Denmark, taken from his notes as a youth of twenty-two.

"*An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth,* the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual [Kierkegaard's italics]."

". . . The passion of the infinite is the truth."

For Descartes the self's awareness of its own existence finds its purest form in realization of its thinking and other inner activity. For Kierkegaard the highest power of consciousness is reached when the self, with passionate inwardness, lays hold of objective uncertainty. Authentic selfhood is developed for Descartes as a by-product of systematic doubt, which leads to sureness of existence. But Kierkegaard finds the true self in the midst of the passion and despair of unrelieved doubt. Faith and doubt, subject and object, are paradoxically related. It is not a case of one giving way to the other.

If Edwards represents a type of "existentialism" marked by a vision of reality, Kierkegaard's somewhat more familiar version expresses despair of our ever knowing reality in this life. In both cases "truth" is more a relation between the knower and the known than any impersonal definition of the "whatness" of an object. For both thinkers, life holds both threat and promise as felt in the opposites of anxiety and hope, hatred and love, fear and courage.

For Edwards the passion and action that spring from "sense of the heart" take their cue from sense experience, qualified by the vision of God's beauty and all-inclusive Being. For Kierkegaard the passion and action of authentic existence spring from the realization of God's "absence," or the threat of nonbeing. For Edwards faith carries the courage to affirm the being of the neighbor, and indeed all being, in the light of Being as such. For Kierkegaard, faith involves the courage to believe and act even in the face of the "absurd"—the rationally unbelievable, or deep uncertainty. What is required is the "courage to be" *in spite of* the hiddenness of Being.

If Schleiermacher explores the nature of self-consciousness, Kierkegaard does the same for human existence. He indicates "stages on life's way" as

the aesthetic (life shaped by immediate *desire*), the ethical (life shaped by *duty*), and the religious in two forms. Religion A is life shaped by *devotion* to the absolute *telos*. Religion B is radical discipleship in the face of the absolute paradox of the God-man. Kierkegaard does not think of these stages as following any definite sequence. Rather, they are typical styles of existence in which one motive or another dominates, and the lower may be "dethroned" by the higher. Consciousness is most intense in the ethical and religious stages, and so also is subject-object awareness. When the motivation is duty, and actions are ruled by universal standards, one may say that the subject is "in truth" if he is moved by the unconditional obligation to love. Duty dethrones desire, for in this stage life involves commitment rather than random whim.

All this lies pretty largely within the Kantian perspective,[1] where truth of faith is rooted in morality touched with a sense of the divine. Truth for Kant also appears in action prompted by universal standards, necessity, and the recognition that all duties are divine commands. The subject is not simply an observer or manipulator of his environment. He is a valuing agent related to the object by duty.

But Kierkegaard also has affinities with Schleiermacher in the final subordination of ethical to religious motivation. When the ethical is dethroned by the religious life, one meets guilt and suffering in putting aside older goals and desires. Also the sense of sin and despair that comes with firsthand awareness of the break between finite and infinite, when we are confronted by the paradox of the God-man.

The particular may in fact take precedence over the universal, as in the "teleological suspension of the ethical." For instance, a general duty in life, by universal standards, is to help the neighbor around us. Yet a man might turn his back on local or family need in order to obey some other, more deeply felt inner command in which he feels the will of God, without being able to justify it externally. Of such differences from ordinary obligation are the lives of the saints made. The subject is "*in* truth" to the extent that he knows the object with passionate inwardness, i.e., without external support from either persons or superficial tradition. He is thus thrown back upon his own radical freedom as an individual.

The significant element here is not so much any breakthrough in consciousness by some sort of more basic awareness (as in the "feeling of absolute dependence" described by Schleiermacher). Nor is it something mediated, as in Idealistic philosophy.[2] Rather, in the religious stages,

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[1] We saw above, pp. 180–198, Kant's outlook in this respect.

[2] Kierkegaard is highly critical of the philosophic tendencies fostered by Idealism. What he means, therefore, by "truth as subjectivity" must be carefully distinguished from the views of a man like Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). The latter modifies Kant, who surely gave impetus and shape to his work, in a way that

especially that of complete discipleship, the subject is related paradoxically to the object. Faith lives precisely in the contradiction between passionate inwardness and objective uncertainty. This contradiction cannot be softened in concrete life.

The following selection from Kierkegaard is lucid but difficult to read. Yet one will hardly find a better example of one of the major sources of modern existentialism and his reasoning. Thus we may be forgiven, perhaps, for following the thread of his thought in more than usual detail.

The philosopher begins with a concern to clarify what is meant by "being," since he recognizes that *truth* somehow involves the relation of *thought* to *being*. As we see it externally, truth certainly is the conformity of thought to what appears to us as reality, which may be called being. Idealistic philosophy expresses the conformity the other way around. But the writer warns us not to be caught by tricks of fancy wording. With a gibe at Fichte for the meaningless grandeur of his "I-am-I" definition, Kierkegaard notes that he himself (like all mankind) is only a "poor existing human being."

He proceeds with his argument. In the empirical approach, truth becomes something you are aiming at, that you desire to reach but never in any complete sense achieve. In any approach that involves concrete existence, you and the truth are both always in the process of becoming. There is no real beginning or end.

When we *make* a beginning ourselves, in speaking or thinking of something, it is not the result of any inevitable movement of reality but is done actually through the will. Thus when "being" is understood abstractly, as a reflection of the concrete being we find around us, there is nothing to prevent our defining the truth as abstractly definite and com-

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moves toward the Absolute Idealism of the Hegelian school. (See Fichte's *The Vocation of Man,* especially Book II.) Fichte started with Kant's stress upon the self as a free ethical agent set within a world of fixity and determination. But he shattered Kant's balance between the "moral law within" and the "starry heavens above," between the contributions of the knowing subject and the stimulus of objective phenomena which are finally anchored in the *ding an sich* ["thing in itself"]. Fichte was concerned to emancipate the self from bondage to the object. After all, if the "thing in itself" is basically unknown and unknowable, why assume it at all? Thence follows the notion of the "ego positing the nonego." Subject and object are really modifications of the knower himself. Especially in the experience of fundamental obligation, the "ego" implies both its own existence and the existence of other persons and the world.

Kierkegaard will have none of this. Such an abstract unity between thought and being lacks the living quality of concrete becoming. The "subjectivity" Kierkegaard calls for erupts in the face of the object. The object is not lost in the subject, nor the subject in the object. Truth apprehended by an *existing* individual is fragmentary rather than all-encompassing, passionate rather than neutral, concrete rather than abstract, broken rather than systematized.

plete. But this way the definition becomes mere duplication. Thought and being mean the same thing. Our definition says nothing more than that "the truth *is*." Abstract thought can never get out of this difficulty. But as soon as the "being" that corresponds to truth becomes concrete, then truth itself is at once in the process of becoming. It looks ahead to a conformity of thought with being that is only realized in God, but not in any presently knowable form of existence. All existence is in the process of becoming.

Yet the question of truth remains. And Kierkegaard (with a jab at German philosophers) thinks he can make himself clear about it. (Whether this notion is well founded from our point of view, the reader may determine.) The ordinary person, the "poor existing spirit," is confronted by two alternatives. Truth in objective thought becomes an object, and attention is then turned away from the thinking subject. In subjective reflection, on the other hand, the truth becomes a question of inwardness, of subjectivity.

Here the modern reader must remember that the meanings of these words are still in transition on their way to our own age. "Objective thought" here means abstract thought, but *about* things in the world, not oneself. It is "objective" thought that can be completed and finished, because it is abstract. We pick it up where we will and draw conclusions from it. "Subjective reflection" in Kierkegaard's vocabulary is what is concerned in an empirical approach. For this is the approach of personal experience. In the realities of experience everything is always incomplete, always becoming.

This rather mixed distinction from modern language must be kept in mind, or Kierkegaard himself will appear confused. Now, he asks, is the difference in approach permanent, or is there some way to make subject and object merge? The notion of "mediation" comes to mind (as in Fichte and Hegel)—another fancy notion of which the writer disposes ironically. The mediating principle concerns eternity—is *sub specie aeterni* as the saying goes. Of what use is it to explain to a man that eternal truth is to be understood eternally, when the poor fellow is caught in the "strait jacket of existence"? What the average person needs is an explanation of how eternal truth is to be understood by ordinary people.

Which of the two ways, then, should one choose—the objective or the subjective? (For only the unreal, fantastic "I" can follow both.) Since the inquirer is an existing individual, the way that emphasizes existence seems appropriate.

We have noted already that for objective reflection the *subject* is incidental. When we think or reason about things, our real being is for the moment laid aside, becomes unimportant. In abstract thinking, in other words, we momentarily put aside the concrete world. Thus in objective

truth, as Kierkegaard calls it, the subject and subjectivity become indifferent. This is, in fact, what makes objectiveness valid (for "all interest, like all decisiveness, is rooted in subjectivity"). "Objective" reflection is proper to abstract thought—mathematics, historical knowledge. It leads away from the subject, whose existence or nonexistence becomes, quite rightly, irrelevant to it.

There is supposed to be one advantage in the objective approach, which Kierkegaard now seizes upon for an amusing but fiery digression. In a word: safety from madness. (Here we catch a fleeting glimpse of the writer's complacent contemporaries, wary of too much inwardness or feeling.) But the writer gives the ironic illustration of a man who, while making perfectly true objective statements, is yet mad. He compares him with the average philosopher of the day, the typical *Privatdocent*. Of this solemnly wise fellow Kierkegaard remarks that every time his academic gown reminds him that he ought to say something, he says "*de omnibus dubitandum est* [all knowledge begins in doubt]." At the same time he writes away at a system "which offers abundant internal evidence in every other sentence that the man has never doubted anything at all." Yet he is not regarded as mad.

Don Quixote, on the other hand, is usually taken as the model of subjective madness, in whom inner passion "embraces a fixed, finite idea." With a tart, sardonic quality, but also—somehow—great underlying sadness, Kierkegaard develops his droll analysis. In the madness of inwardness, the comic and also tragic thing is that the person becomes deeply concerned about something that has no meaning or importance to anyone else. But with *lack* of inwardness the strange thing is that, although what a person knows and says *is* really true and *does* concern all men, he himself is not concerned about it at all! This sort of derangement of feeling (that consists in not having any) is much more inhuman than the other.[3]

We hesitate to look into the eyes of the first type, lest we be "compelled to plumb the depths of his delirium." But we dare not look at the second at all, for fear of discovering "that he has eyes of glass and hair made from carpet-rags; that he is, in short, an artificial product." We listen to him with dread, hardly knowing whether it is a human being who speaks, "or a cunningly contrived walking stick in which a talking machine has been concealed." It is never pleasant, the writer goes on blandly, for a proud man "to find himself unwittingly drinking a toast of brotherhood with

[3] One cannot help feeling behind his expressions of scorn the cumulative experience of the writer: his mother and three sisters dead in a single year, five out of seven brothers and sisters gone by the time he was twenty-one, his love lost, his face the sort of countenance that caricatured like a Pinocchio, his passionate sincerities often taken as either scandalous or comic. Although his dignity does not fail, there is a hunger and a desolation here, when it comes to commenting on lack of feeling in people, that is painful even to read.

the public hangman; but to find onself engaged in rational and philosophical conversation with a walking stick is almost enough to make a man lose his mind." Kierkegaard's capacity for scathing attack on the shallow complacencies of his time is uncanny.

He goes back to his suspended argument. He has described objective thought. Subjectivity, on the other hand, turns inward and tries by intensification to realize the truth. Here, in turn, objectivity begins to disappear. But let us not forget, says Kierkegaard, that this is an existing individual, without power to realize things in an eternal way. He cannot get, or stand, outside himself. (The "I-am-I" of the Idealists is a mathematical point which does not exist.) The only way the individual can realize existentially the unity of the finite and the infinite is in a moment of passion. Much nonsense has been written to enable the individual to "transcend himself" objectively, which is wholly impossible. These writers hold passion in contempt. Yet it is the "culmination of existence for an existing individual," and we are all such. In passion the subject is rendered infinite "in the eternity of imaginative representation"—in a sense outside of time. But he is still himself.

All essential knowledge, says this writer, has to do with existence. This means that knowledge has a relation to the knower, who is an existing person. And only ethical and ethico-religious knowledge has an essential relation to the existence of the knower. Subjective reflection makes its way inward. Inwardness ends in passion. And in the passion of the subject, truth becomes a paradox by the very fact of being a relationship to an existing subject.

When truth is considered *objectively,* reflection is directed to it as an object to which the knower is related. Attention is not focused on the relationship, however, but on the question of whether the *object* is the truth. If only the object is true, the subject is assumed to be "in the truth."

When the question of truth is raised *subjectively,* attention is directed to the nature of the individual's relationship. If only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, then the individual is in the truth, even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true.

Here Kierkegaard turns to the question of knowledge of God. The objective approach can never reach God, for God "is a subject, and cannot be apprehended objectively, to all eternity." But the subject, the ordinary person, as he realizes in all its painfulness the difficulty of finding God in the outward world—"in that very instant he has God by virtue of the infinite passion of inwardness."

Here, the writer says, is the parting of the ways. The true answer cannot be in doubt "for anyone who has not been demoralized by science."[4]

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[4] See p. 385.

Let us suppose that a "Christian" goes to church and prays falsely, while on the other hand a heathen prays with the entire passion of the infinite, but looking at an idol. Which of them finds God? We cannot help but see that one of them prays the truth to God even though he worships an idol; while the other prays falsely to the true God, and so in fact worships an idol himself.

The passion of the infinite is the truth. But the passion of the infinite is subjectivity. Thus subjectivity becomes the truth. Objectively, abstractly, there is no decisiveness. We see everything equally. Subjectively there is the choice between good and evil. The passion itself is the decisive factor, not its content. Its true content *is* precisely itself. By it a person is thrust into striving, because he is an individual and in the world.

(We may note here, conveniently, that Kierkegaard's sense of truth, well expressed in the quotations on p. 368, comes very near to what we might nowadays call "commitment" or completeness of dedication. For him "truth" that is only shallowly seen, and not felt, does not even merit the name. For himself all this meant the burden of a heroic willingness to go in the face of the "absurd." That is, against what is narrowly reasonable and plausible, whether this concerns one's own life of "inwardness" or the very incarnation of the God-man himself.)

Faith, says Kierkegaard, is the contradiction between the infinite passion of a person's inwardness and his objective uncertainty about God, after seeking Him in nature. Faith is the string of tension across this gap. "When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox . . . ." The paradoxical character of truth comes from its objective uncertainty. (This is an expression for passionate inwardness, and the passion is "precisely the truth.")

"The eternal essential truth *is not in itself a paradox* [emphasis supplied by present editors], but becomes so by relation to the existing individual." The misfortune of speculative philosophy, Kierkegaard believed, had been to forget the existing individual. Socrates was "in the truth." His inwardness was like faith, in the way he faced his ignorance of what was to come. But faith itself, facing the "absurd"—the God-man—is infinitely more profound.

Our selection is from Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* a very long work which the writer originally intended as his final piece of writing.[5] In point of fact, however, the book marks the midpoint of his literary career. Shortly after it appeared, he wrote a challenge to the comic paper *Corsair,* which had criticized him. He was immediately

[5] An entry in his journal in 1846 makes this clear, together with his purpose of retiring to the country to take up the duties of a pastor. This and other details of the circumstances, as well as Kierkegaard's pronouncements on science below, are from the Introduction by the editor, Walter Lowrie, to the edition cited, pp. xiii–xvi.

the butt of so much ridicule and abuse that he felt it would be cowardly to leave Copenhagen, and was soon again deeply involved in polemical writing.

This book is a sequel to the *Philosophical Fragments.* The word "unscientific" in the title, his editor tells us, means hardly more than does an earlier wording for the same title—"simple"—found in his notes. It was just another gibe at lofty scholarship. But it is true that he had one of the strange blind spots that occur in great thinkers. Thus Descartes maintained a low opinion of literature and painting, in the very city and lifetime of Rembrandt. Kierkegaard scorned natural science. He said it was for the most part not science but curiosity. He even predicted that "in the end all corruption will come about as a consequence of the natural sciences."

Science, he insisted, "by pretending to explain the miracle of qualitative change only throws dust in our eyes. It pretends to be on the point of explaining everything." Whereas, he said, it suffocates faith and defrauds us "not only of the wonder which is the starting point of religion, but of the possibility which makes spiritual life possible." This is pretty strong, but in the face of what our own generation has seen, who is to say it is altogether mistaken?

Kierkegaard, like Schleiermacher, develops his thought in the array of titles and subtitles to his work. Book II of his volume is called "The Subjective Problem, the Relation of the Subject to the Truth of Christianity." Under this, Part Two is entitled, "How the Subjectivity of the Individual Must Be Qualified in Order that the Problem May Exist for Him." Under which, in turn, our excerpt covers about the first third of Chapter II, entitled as shown.

(Reprinted from Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, trans. and ed., by permission of Princeton University Press [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1941], Book II, Part Two, Chap. II, "The Subjective Truth, Inwardness; Truth Is Subjectivity," pp. 169–84. Italics used for emphasis in this selection are Kierkegaard's. Asterisks refer to footnotes by writer, numbered series to translator's or editor's notes.)

CHAPTER II
THE SUBJECTIVE TRUTH, INWARDNESS; TRUTH IS SUBJECTIVITY

Whether truth is defined more empirically, as the conformity of thought and being, or more idealistically, as the conformity of being with thought, it is, in either case, important carefully to note what is meant by being. And in formulating the answer to this question it is likewise

important to take heed lest the knowing spirit be tricked into losing itself in the indeterminate, so that it fantastically becomes a something that no existing human being ever was or can be, a sort of phantom with which the individual occupies himself upon occasion, but without making it clear to himself in terms of dialectical intermediaries how he happens to get into this fantastic realm, what significance being there has for him, and whether the entire activity that goes on out there does not resolve itself into a tautology within a recklessly fantastic venture of thought.

If being, in the two indicated definitions, is understood as empirical being, truth is at once transformed into a *desideratum,* and everything must be understood in terms of becoming; for the empirical object is unfinished and the existing cognitive spirit is itself in process of becoming. Thus the truth becomes an approximation whose beginning cannot be posited absolutely, precisely because the conclusion is lacking, the effect of which is retroactive. Whenever a beginning is *made,* on the other hand, unless through being unaware of this the procedure stamps itself as arbitrary, such a beginning is not the consequence of an immanent movement of thought, but is effected through a resolution of the will, essentially in the strength of faith. That the knowing spirit is an existing individual spirit, and that every human being is such an entity existing for himself, is a truth I cannot too often repeat; for the fantastic neglect of this is responsible for much confusion. Let no one misunderstand me. I happen to be a poor existing spirit like all other men; but if there is any lawful and honest manner in which I could be helped into becoming something extraordinary, like the pure I-am-I[1] for example, I always stand ready gratefully to accept the gift and the benefaction. But if it can only be done in the manner indicated, by saying *ein zwei drei kokolorum,* or by tying a string around the little finger, and then when the moon is full, hiding it in some secret place—in that case I prefer to remain what I am, a poor existing human being.

The term "being," as used in the above definitions, must therefore be understood (from the systematic standpoint) much more abstractly, presumably as the abstract reflection of, or the abstract prototype for, what being is as concrete empirical being. When so understood there is nothing to prevent us from abstractly determining the truth as abstractly finished and complete; for the correspondence between thought and being is, from the abstract point of view, always finished. Only with the concrete does becoming enter in, and it is from the concrete that abstract thought abstracts.

But if being is understood in this manner, the formula becomes a tautology. Thought and being mean one and the same thing, and the corre-

[1] Referring to Fichte's philosophy.

spondence spoken of is merely an abstract self-identity. Neither formula says anything more than that the truth is, so understood as to accentuate the copula: the truth *is*, i.e. the truth is a reduplication. Truth is the subject of the assertion, but the assertion that it is, is the same as the subject; for this being that the truth is said to have is never its own abstract form. In this manner we give expression to the fact that the truth is not something simple, but is in a wholly abstract sense a reduplication, a reduplication which is nevertheless instantly revoked.

Abstract thought may continue as long as it likes to rewrite this thought in varying phraseology, it will never get any farther. As soon as the being which corresponds to the truth comes to be empirically concrete, the truth is put in process of becoming, and is again by way of anticipation the conformity of thought with being. This conformity is actually realized for God, but it is not realized for any existing spirit, who is himself existentially in process of becoming.

For an existing spirit *qua* existing spirit, the question of the truth will again exist. The abstract answer has significance only for the abstraction into which an existing spirit is transformed when he abstracts from himself *qua* existing individual. This can be done only momentarily, and even in such moments of abstraction the abstract thinker pays his debt to existence by existing in spite of all abstraction. It is therefore an existing spirit who is now conceived as raising the question of truth, presumably in order that he may exist in it; but in any case the question is raised by someone who is conscious of being a particular existing human being. In this way I believe I can render myself intelligible to every Greek, as well as to every reasonable human being. If a German philosopher wishes to indulge a passion for making himself over, and, just as alchemists and necromancers were wont to garb themselves fantastically, first makes himself over into a superrational something for the purpose of answering this question of the truth in an extremely satisfactory manner, the affair is no concern of mine; nor is his extremely satisfactory answer, which is no doubt very satisfactory indeed—when you are fantastically transformed. On the other hand, whether it is or is not the case that a German professor behaves in this manner, can be readily determined by anyone who will concentrate enthusiastically upon seeking guidance at the hands of such a sage, without criticism but seeking merely to assimilate the wisdom in a docile spirit by proposing to shape his own life in accordance with it. Precisely when thus enthusiastically attempting to learn from such a German professor, one would realize the most apt of epigrams upon him. For such a speculative philosopher could hardly be more embarrassed than by the sincere and enthusiastic zeal of a learner who proposes to express and to realize his wisdom by appropriating it existentially. For this wisdom is something that the Herr Professor has merely

imagined, and written books about, but never himself tried. Aye, it has never even occurred to him that this should be done. Like the custom clerk who writes what he could not himself read, satisfied that his responsibilities ended with the writing, so there are speculative philosophers who write what, when it is to be read in the light of action, shows itself to be nonsense, unless it is, perhaps, intended only for fantastic beings.

In that the question of truth is thus raised by an existing spirit *qua* existing, the above abstract reduplication that is involved in it again confronts him. But existence itself, namely, existence as it is in the individual who raises the question and himself exists, keeps the two moments of thought and being apart, so that reflection presents him with two alternatives. For an objective reflection the truth becomes an object, something objective, and thought must be pointed away from the subject. For a subjective reflection the truth becomes a matter of appropriation, of inwardness, of subjectivity, and thought must probe more and more deeply into the subject and his subjectivity.

But then what? Shall we be compelled to remain in this disjunction, or may we not here accept the offer of benevolent assistance from the principle of mediation, so that the truth becomes an identity of subject and object?[2] Well, why not? But can the principle of mediation also help the existing individual while still remaining in existence himself to become the mediating principle, which is *sub specie aeterni,* whereas the poor existing individual is confined to the straight-jacket of existence? Surely it cannot do any good to mock a man, luring him on by dangling before his eyes the identity of subject and object, when his situation prevents him from making use of this identity, since he is in process of becoming in consequence of being an existing individual. How can it help to explain to a man how the eternal truth is to be understood eternally, when the supposed user of the explanation is prevented from so understanding it through being an existing individual, and merely becomes fantastic when he imagines himself to be *sub specie aeterni?* What such a man needs instead is precisely an explanation of how the eternal truth is to be understood in determinations of time by one who as existing is himself in time, which even the worshipful Herr Professor concedes, if not always, at least once a quarter when he draws his salary.

The identity of subject and object posited through an application of the principle of mediation merely carries us back to where we were before, to the abstract definition of the truth as an identity of thought and being; for to determine the truth as an identity of thought and object

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[2] As in Fichte's philosophy, *Werke,* Vol. I, p. 98. The "pure I" equals "subject-object."

is precisely the same thing as saying that the truth *is*, i.e. that the truth is a reduplication. The lofty wisdom has thus again merely been absent-minded enough to forget that it was an existing spirit who asked about the truth. Or is the existing spirit himself the identity of subject and object, the subject-object? In that case I must press the question of where such an existing human being is, when he is thus at the same time also a subject-object? Or shall we perhaps here again first transform the existing spirit into something in general, and thereupon explain everything except the question asked, namely, how an existing subject is related to the truth *in concreto;* explain everything except the question that must in the next instance be asked, namely, how a particular existing spirit is related to this something in general, which seems to have not a little in common with a paper kite, or with the lump of sugar which the Dutch used to hang up under the loft for all to lick at.

So we return to the two ways of reflection; and we have not forgotten that it is an existing spirit who asks the question, a wholly individual human being. Nor can we forget that the fact that he exists is precisely what will make it impossible for him to proceed along both ways at once, while his earnest concern will prevent him from frivolously and fantastically becoming subject-object. Which of these two ways is now the way of truth for an existing spirit? For only the fantastic I-am-I is at once finished with both ways, or proceeds methodically along both ways simultaneously, a mode of ambulation which for an existing human is so inhuman that I dare not recomend it.

Since the inquirer stresses precisely the fact that he is an existing individual, then one of the above two ways which especially accentuates existence would seem to be especially worthy of commendation.

The way of objective reflection makes the subject accidental, and thereby transforms existence into something indifferent, something vanishing. Away from the subject the objective way of reflection leads to the objective truth, and while the subject and his subjectivity becomes indifferent, the truth also becomes indifferent, and this indifference is precisely its objective validity; for all interest, like all decisiveness, is rooted in subjectivity. The way of objective reflection leads to abstract thought, to mathematics, to historical knowledge of different kinds; and always it leads away from the subject, whose existence or non-existence, and from the objective point of view quite rightly, becomes infinitely indifferent. Quite rightly, since as Hamlet says,[3] existence and non-existence have only subjective significance. At its maximum this way will arrive at a contradiction, and in so far as the subject does not become wholly indifferent to himself, this merely constitutes a sign that his ob-

[3] Act III, Scene I.

jective striving is not objective enough. At its maximum this way will lead to the contradiction that only the objective has come into being, while the subjective has gone out; that is to say, the existing subjectivity has vanished, in that it has made an attempt to become what in the abstract sense is called subjectivity, the mere abstract form of an abstract objectivity. And yet, the objectivity which has thus come into being is, from the subjective point of view at the most, either an hypothesis or an approximation, because all eternal decisiveness is rooted in subjectivity.

However, the objective way deems itself to have a security which the subjective way does not have (and, of course, existence and existing cannot be thought in combination with objective security); it thinks to escape a danger which threatens the subjective way, and this danger is at its maximum: madness. In a merely subjective determination of the truth, madness and truth become in the last analysis indistinguishable, since they may both have inwardness.* Nevertheless, perhaps I may here venture to offer a little remark, one which would seem to be not wholly superfluous in an objective age. The absence of inwardness is also madness. The objective truth as such, is by no means adequate to determine that whoever utters it is sane; on the contrary, it may even betray the fact that he is mad, although what he says may be entirely true, and especially objectively true. I shall here permit myself to tell a story, which without any sort of adaptation on my part comes direct from an asylum. A patient in such an institution seeks to escape, and actually succeeds in effecting his purpose by leaping out of a window, and prepares to start on the road to freedom, when the thought strikes him (shall I say sanely enough or madly enough?): "When you come to town you will be recognized, and you will at once be brought back here again; hence you need to prepare yourself fully to convince everyone by the objective truth of what you say, that all is in order as far as your sanity is concerned." As he walks along and thinks about this, he sees a ball lying on the ground, picks it up, and puts it into the tail pocket of his coat. Every step he takes the ball strikes him, politely speaking, on his hinder parts, and every time it thus strikes him he says: "Bang, the earth is round." He comes to the city, and at once calls on one of his friends; he wants to convince him that he is not crazy, and therefore walks back and forth, saying continually: "Bang, the earth is round!" But is not the earth round? Does the asylum still crave yet another sacrifice for this

* Even this is not really true, however, for madness never has the specific inwardness of the infinite. Its fixed idea is precisely some sort of objectivity, and the contradiction of madness consists in embracing this with passion. The critical point in such madness is thus again not the subjective, but the little finitude which has become a fixed idea, which is something that can never happen to the infinite.

opinion, as in the time when all men believed it to be flat as a pancake? Or is a man who hopes to prove that he is sane, by uttering a generally accepted and generally respected objective truth, insane? And yet it was clear to the physician that the patient was not yet cured; though it is not to be thought that the cure would consist in getting him to accept the opinion that the earth is flat. But all men are not physicians, and what the age demands seems to have a considerable influence upon the question of what madness is. Aye, one could almost be tempted sometimes to believe that the modern age, which has modernized Christianity, has also modernized the question of Pontius Pilate, and that its urge to find something in which it can rest proclaims itself in the question: What is madness? When a *Privatdocent,* every time his scholastic gown reminds him that he ought to say something, says *de omnibus dubitandum est,* and at the same time writes away at a system which offers abundant internal evidence in every other sentence that the man has never doubted anything at all: he is not regarded as mad.

Don Quixote is the prototype for a subjective madness, in which the passion of inwardness embraces a particular finite fixed idea. But the absence of inwardness gives us on the other hand the prating madness, which is quite as comical; and it might be a very desirable thing if an experimental psychologist would delineate it by taking a handful of such philosophers and bringing them together. In the type of madness which manifests itself as an aberrant inwardness, the tragic and the comic is that the something which is of such infinite concern to the unfortunate individual is a particular fixation which does not really concern anybody. In the type of madness which consists in the absence of inwardness, the comic is that though the something which the happy individual knows really is the truth, the truth which concerns all men, it does not in the slightest degree concern the much respected prater. This type of madness is more inhuman than the other. One shrinks from looking into the eyes of a madman of the former type lest one be compelled to plumb there the depths of his delirium; but one dares not look at a madman of the latter type at all, from fear of discovering that he has eyes of glass and hair made from carpet-rags; that he is, in short, an artificial product. If you meet someone who suffers from such a derangement of feeling, the derangement consisting in his not having any, you listen to what he says in a cold and awful dread, scarcely knowing whether it is a human being who speaks, or a cunningly contrived walking stick in which a talking machine has been concealed. It is always unpleasant for a proud man to find himself unwittingly drinking a toast of brotherhood with the public hangman;[4] but to find oneself engaged in rational and philo-

[4] Like Geert Wetphalter in Scene 8 of the comedy of that name.

sophical conversation with a walking stick is almost enough to make a man lose his mind.

The subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject, and desires in this intensification of inwardness to realize the truth. And it proceeds in such fashion that, just as in the preceding objective reflection, when the objectivity had come into being, the subjectivity had vanished, so here the subjectivity of the subject becomes the final stage, and objectivity a vanishing factor. Not for a single moment is it forgotten that the subject is an existing individual, and that existence is a process of becoming, and that therefore the notion of the truth as identity of thought and being is a chimera of abstraction, in its truth only an expectation of the creature; not because the truth is not such an identity, but because the knower is an existing individual for whom the truth cannot be such an identity as long as he lives in time. Unless we hold fast to this, speculative philosophy will immediately transport us into the fantastic realism of the I-am-I, which modern speculative thought has not hesitated to use without explaining how a particular individual is related to it; and God knows, no human being is more than such a particular individual.

If an existing individual were really able to transcend himself, the truth would be for him something final and complete; but where is the point at which he is outside himself? The I-am-I is a mathematical point which does not exist, and in so far there is nothing to prevent everyone from occupying this standpoint; the one will not be in the way of the other. It is only momentarily that the particular individual is able to realize existentially a unity of the infinite and the finite which transcends existence. This unity is realized in the moment of passion. Modern philosophy has tried anything and everything in the effort to help the individual to transcend himself objectively, which is a wholly impossible feat; existence exercises its restraining influence, and if philosophers nowadays had not become mere scribblers in the service of a fantastic thinking and its preoccupation, they would long ago have perceived that suicide was the only tolerable practical interpretation of its striving. But the scribbling modern philosophy holds passion in contempt; and yet passion is the culmination of existence for an existing individual—and we are all of us existing individuals. In passion the existing subject is rendered infinite in the eternity of the imaginative representation, and yet he is at the same time most definitely himself. The fantastic I-am-I is not an identity of the infinite and the finite, since neither the one nor the other is real; it is a fantastic rendezvous in the clouds,[5] an unfruitful embrace, and the relationship of the individual self to this mirage is never indicated.

[5] As when Axion sought to embrace Juno and found that he was embracing a cloud.

All essential knowledge relates to existence, or only such knowledge as has an essential relationship to existence is essential knowledge. All knowledge which does not inwardly relate itself to existence, in the reflection of inwardness, is, essentially viewed, accidental knowledge; its degree and scope is essentially indifferent. That essential knowledge is essentially related to existence does not mean the above-mentioned identity which abstract thought postulates between thought and being; nor does it signify, objectively, that knowledge corresponds to something existent as its object. But it means that knowledge has a relationship to the knower, who is essentially an existing individual, and that for this reason all essential knowledge is essentially related to existence. Only ethical and ethico-religious knowledge has an essential relationship to the existence of the knower.

Mediation is a mirage, like the I-am-I. From the abstract point of view everything is and nothing comes into being. Mediation can therefore have no place in abstract thought because it presupposes *movement.* Objective knowledge may indeed have the existent for its object; but since the knowing subject is an existing individual, and through the fact of his existence in process of becoming, philosophy must first explain how a particular existing subject is related to a knowledge of mediation. It must explain what he is in such a moment, if not pretty nearly *distrait;* where he is, if not in the moon? There is constant talk of mediation and mediation; is mediation then a man, as Peter Deacon[6] believes that *Imprimatur* is a man? How does a human being manage to become something of this kind? Is this dignity, this great *philosophicum,* the fruit of study, or does the magistrate give it away, like the office of deacon or grave-digger? Try merely to enter into these and other such plain questions of a plain man, who would gladly become mediation if it could be done in some lawful and honest manner, and not either by saying *ein zwei drei kokolorum,* or by forgetting that he is himself an existing human being, for whom existence is therefore something essential, and an ethico-religious existence a suitable *quantum satis* [fulfillment]. A speculative philosopher may perhaps find it in bad taste to ask such questions. But it is important not to direct the polemic to the wrong point, and hence not to begin in a fanastic objective manner to discuss *pro* and *contra* whether there is a mediation or not, but to hold fast what it means to be a human being.

In an attempt to make clear the difference of way that exists between an objective and a subjective reflection, I shall now proceed to show how a subjective reflection makes its way inwardly in inwardness. Inwardness in an existing subject culminates in passion; corresponding to passion in the subject the truth becomes a paradox; and the fact that

[6] As in Holberg's comedy *Erasmus Montanus,* Act III, Scene 3.

the truth becomes a paradox is rooted precisely in its having a relationship to an existing subject. Thus the one corresponds to the other. By forgetting that one is an existing subject, passion goes by the board and the truth is no longer a paradox; the knowing subject becomes a fantastic entity rather than a human being, and the truth becomes a fantastic object for the knowledge of this fantastic entity.

When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focussed upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of the truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true.[*] Let us take as an example the knowledge of God. Objectively, reflection is directed to the problem of whether this object is the true God; subjectively, reflection is directed to the question whether the individual is related to a something *in such a manner* that his relationship is in truth a God-relationship. On which side is the truth now to be found? Ah, may we not here resort to a mediation, and say: It is on neither side, but in the mediation of both? Excellently well said, provided we might have it explained how an existing individual manages to be in a state of mediation. For to be in a state of mediation is to be finished, while to exist is to become. Nor can an existing individual be in two places at the same time—he cannot be an identity of subject and object. When he is nearest to being in two places at the same time he is in passion; but passion is momentary, and passion is also the highest expression of subjectivity.

The existing individual who chooses to pursue the objective way enters upon the entire approximation-process by which it is proposed to bring God to light objectively. But this is in all eternity impossible, because God is a subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness. The existing individual who chooses the subjective way apprehends instantly the entire dialectical difficulty involved in having to use some time, perhaps a long time, in finding God objectively; and he feels this dialectical difficulty in all its painfulness, because every moment is wasted in which he does not have God.[†] That very instant he has God, not by

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[*] The reader will observe that the question here is about essential truth, or about the truth which is essentially related to existence, and that it is precisely for the sake of clarifying it as inwardness or as subjectivity that this contrast is drawn.

[†] In this manner God certainly becomes a postulate, but not in the otiose manner in which this word is commonly understood. It becomes clear rather that the only

virtue of any objective deliberation, but by virtue of the infinite passion of inwardness. The objective inquirer, on the other hand, is not embarrassed by such dialectical difficulties as are involved in devoting an entire period of investigation to finding God—since it is possible that the inquirer may die tomorrow; and if he lives he can scarcely regard God as something to be taken along if convenient, since God is precisely that which one takes *à tout prix* [at all costs], which in the understanding of passion constitutes the true inward relationship to God.

It is at this point, so difficult dialectically, that the way swings off for everyone who knows what it means to think, and to think existentially; which is something very different from sitting at a desk and writing about what one has never done, something very different from writing *de omnibus dubitandum* [about doubting everything] and at the same time being as credulous existentially as the most sensuous of men. Here is where the way swings off, and the change is marked by the fact that while objective knowledge rambles comfortably on by way of the long road of approximation without being impelled by the urge of passion, subjective knowledge counts every delay a deadly peril, and the decision so infinitely important and so instantly pressing that it is as if the opportunity had already passed.

Now when the problem is to reckon up on which side there is most truth, whether on the side of one who seeks the true God objectively, and pursues the approximate truth of the God-idea; or on the side of one who, driven by the infinite passion of his need of God, feels an infinite concern for his own relationship to God in truth (and to be at one and the same time on both sides equally, is as we have noted not possible for an existing individual, but is merely the happy delusion of an imaginary I-am-I): the answer cannot be in doubt for anyone who has not been demoralized with the aid of science. If one who lives in the midst of Christendom goes up to the house of God, the house of the true God, with the true conception of God in his knowledge, and prays, but prays in a false spirit; and one who lives in an idolatrous community prays with the entire passion of the infinite, although his eyes rest upon the image of an idol: where is there most truth? The one prays in truth to God though he worships an idol; the other prays falsely to the true God, and hence worships in fact an idol.

When one man investigates objectively the problem of immortality, and another embraces an uncertainty with the passion of the infinite:

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way in which an existing individual comes into relation with God, is when the dialectical contradiction brings his passion to the point of despair, and helps him to embrace God with the "category of despair" (faith). Then the postulate is so far from being arbitrary that it is precisely a life-necessity. It is then not so much that God is a postulate, as that the existing individual's postulation of God is a necessity.

where is there most truth, and who has the greater certainty? The one has entered upon a never-ending approximation, for the certainty of immortality lies precisely in the subjectivity of the individual; the other is immortal, and fights for his immortality by struggling with the uncertainty. Let us consider Socrates.[7] Nowadays everyone dabbles in a few proofs; some have several such proofs, others fewer. But Socrates! He puts the question objectively in a problematic manner: *if* there is an immortality. He must therefore be accounted a doubter in comparison with one of our modern thinkers with the three proofs? By no means. On this "if" he risks his entire life, he has the courage to meet death, and he has with the passion of the infinite so determined the pattern of his life that it must be found acceptable—*if* there is an immortality. Is any better proof capable of being given for the immortality of the soul? But those who have the three proofs do not at all determine their lives in conformity therewith; if there is an immortality it must feel disgust over their manner of life: can any better refutation be given of the three proofs? The bit of uncertainty that Socrates had, helped him because he himself contributed the passion of the infinite; the three proofs that the others have do not profit them at all, because they are dead to spirit and enthusiasm, and their three proofs, in lieu of proving anything else, prove just this. A young girl may enjoy all the sweetness of love on the basis of what is merely a weak hope that she is beloved, because she rests everything on this weak hope; but many a wedded matron more than once subjected to the strongest expressions of love, has in so far indeed had proofs, but strangely enough has not enjoyed *quod erat demonstrandum.* The Socratic ignorance, which Socrates held fast with the entire passion of his inwardness, was thus an expression for the principle that the eternal truth is related to an existing individual, and that this truth must therefore be a paradox for him as long as he exists; and yet it is possible that there was more truth in the Socratic ignorance as it was in him, than in the entire objective truth of the System, which flirts with what the times demand and accommodates itself to *Privatdocents.*

The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said. This distinction holds even in the aesthetic realm, and receives definite expression in the principle that what is in itself true may in the mouth of such and such a person become untrue. In these times this distinction is particularly worthy of notice, for if we wish to express in a single sentence the difference between ancient times and our own, we should doubtless have to say: "In ancient times only an

[7] The reference is doubtless to Plato's *Apology* and to his Phaedrus, though in neither is to be found exactly what S. K. says here.

individual here and there knew the truth; now all know it, except that the inwardness of its appropriation stands in an inverse relationship to the extent of its dissemination."* Aesthetically the contradiction that truth becomes untruth in this or that person's mouth, is best construed comically: In the ethico-religious sphere, accent is again on the "how." But this is not to be understood as referring to demeanor, expression, or the like; rather it refers to the relationship sustained by the exisitng individual, in his own existence, to the content of his utterance. Objectively the interest is focussed merely on the thought-content, subjectively on the inwardness. At its maximum this inward "how" is the passion of the infinite, and the passion of the infinite is the truth. But the passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity becomes the truth. Objectively there is no infinite decisiveness, and hence it is objectively in order to annul the difference between good and evil, together with the principle of contradiction, and therewith also the infinite difference between the true and the false. Only in subjectivity is there decisiveness, to seek objectivity is to be in error. It is the passion of the infinite that is the decisive factor and not its content, for its content is precisely itself. In this manner subjectivity and the subjective "how" constitute the truth. But the "how" which is thus subjectively accentuated precisely because the subject is an existing individual, is also subject to a dialectic with respect to time. In the passionate moment of decision, where the road swings away from objective knowledge, it seems as if the infinite decision were thereby realized. But in the same moment the existing individual finds himself in the temporal order, and the subjective "how" is transformed into a striving, a striving which receives indeed its impulse and a repeated renewal from the decisive passion of the infinite, but is nevertheless a striving.

When subjectivity is the truth, the conceptual determination of the truth must include an expression for the antithesis to objectivity, a me-

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* *Stages on Life's Way,* Note on p. 426. Though ordinarily not wishing an expression of opinion on the part of reviewers, I might at this point almost desire it, provided such opinions, so far from flattering me, amounted to an assertion of the daring truth that what I say is something that everybody knows, even every child, and that the cultured know infinitely much better. If it only stands fast that everyone knows it, my standpoint is in order, and I shall doubtless make shift to manage with the unity of the comic and the tragic. If there were anyone who did not know it I might perhaps be in danger of being dislodged from my position of equilibrium by the thought that I might be in a position to communicate to someone the needful preliminary knowledge. It is just this which engages my interest so much, this that the cultured are accustomed to say: that everyone knows what the highest is. This was not the case in paganism, nor in Judaism, nor in the seventeen centuries of Christianity. Hail to the nineteenth century! Everyone knows it. What progress has been made since the time when only a few knew it. To make up for this, perhaps, we must assume that no one nowadays does it.

mento of the fork in the road where the way swings off; this expression will at the same time serve as an indication of the tension of the subjective inwardness. Here is such a definition of truth: *An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth,* the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual. At the point where the way swings off (and where this is cannot be specified objectively, since it is a matter of subjectivity), there objective knowledge is placed in abeyance. Thus the subject merely has, objectively, the uncertainty; but it is this which precisely increases the tension of that infinite passion which constitutes his inwardness. The truth is precisely the venture which chooses an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. I contemplate the order of nature in the hope of finding God, and I see omnipotence and wisdom; but I also see much else that disturbs my mind and excites anxiety. The sum of all this is an objective uncertainty. But it is for this very reason that the inwardness becomes as intense as it is, for it embraces this objective uncertainty with the entire passion of the infinite. In the case of a mathematical proposition the objectivity is given, but for this reason the truth of such a proposition is also an indifferent truth.

But the above definition of truth is an equivalent expression of faith. Without risk there is no faith. Faith is precisely the contradiction between the infinite passion of the individual's inwardness and the objective uncertainty. If I am capable of grasping God objectively, I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe. If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty, so as to remain out upon the deep, over seventy thousand fathoms of water, still preserving my faith.

In the principle that subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, there is comprehended the Socratic wisdom, whose everlasting merit it was to have become aware of the essential significance of existence, of the fact that the knower is an existing individual. For this reason Socrates was in the truth by virtue of his ignorance, in the highest sense in which this was possible within paganism. To attain to an understanding of this, to comprehend that the misfortune of speculative philosophy is again and again to have forgotten that the knower is an existing individual, is in our objective age difficult enough. "But to have made an advance upon Socrates without even having understood what he understood, is at any rate not 'Socratic.'" Compare the "Moral" of the *Fragments.*[8]

Let us now start from this point, and as was attempted in the *Fragments,* seek a determination of thought which will really carry us further. I have nothing here to do with the question of whether this pro-

[8] P. 93 in the English ed.

posed thought-determination is true or not, since I am merely experimenting; but it must at any rate be clearly manifest that the Socratic thought is understood within the new proposal, so that at least I do not come out behind Socrates.

When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively a paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in its turn that subjectivity is the truth. For the objective situation is repellent; and the expression for the objective repulsion constitutes the tension and the measure of the corresponding inwardness. The paradoxical character of the truth is its objective uncertainty; this uncertainty is an expression for the passionate inwardness, and this passion is precisely the truth. So far the Socratic principle. The eternal and essential truth, the truth which has an essential relationship to an existing individual because it pertains essentially to existence (all other knowledge being from the Socratic point of view accidental, its scope and degree a matter of indifference), is a paradox. But the eternal essential truth is by no means in itself a paradox; but it becomes paradoxical by virtue of its relationship to an existing individual. The Socratic ignorance gives expression to the objective uncertainty attaching to the truth, while his inwardness in existing is the truth. To anticipate here what will be developed later, let me make the following remark. The Socratic ignorance is an analogue to the category of the absurd, only that there is still less of objective certainty in the absurd, and in the repellent effect that the absurd exercises. It is certain only that it is absurd, and precisely on that account it incites to an infinitely greater tension in the corresponding inwardness. The Socratic inwardness in existing is an analogue to faith; only that the inwardness of faith, corresponding as it does, not to the repulsion of the Socratic ignorance, but to the repulsion exerted by the absurd, is infinitely more profound.

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Thus with biting satire Kierkegaard challenged the type of "objective" (or overabstract) outlook that focuses more upon external definitions, upon the "what" of truth, than on the "how." The error of the Idealist philosophers had been that of absorbing the object into the "absolute subject." But the prevailing fault now in view was the reverse one of absorbing the subject into the object. For Kierkegaard the attitude of the knowing subject as a controller of what is known—a mathematician of reality, trying to eliminate or ignore passion—succeeds merely in forgetting that man is an existing individual. It seems to suggest that he can somehow rise above his own location in time and space. The result is not only a "fantastic subject" but a "fantastic object," too.

Truth, in other words, is "subjectivity." From this point of view Kierke-

gaard can say (we repeat the quotation): *"An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth,* the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual [italics Kierkegaard's]." Far from being extraneous or something to get rid of, passion—or caring—is the very means of perceiving, understanding, appropriating. The real issue is not at all whether an object is true, but whether the subject is truly related to it. It is not a matter of control, but of freedom from control. The contradiction cannot be bridged. No definition—no "whatness" of what is known—can supplant the primary question of "how" one stands in the face of the "absolute paradox."

5. Martin Heidegger

1889-

German Catholic philosopher. Born at Messkirch in Baden, just north of Lake Constance. Studied at Freiburg University, influenced by Rickert and Husserl, founder of "phenomenology." In 1923 became professor at Marburg, there published Sein und Zeit (Being and Time), *still the only finished part of projected major work. Succeeded Husserl at Freiburg in 1928. In 1933 became rector (in which role, it is said, he often appeared in mountaineer's shorts). Resigned the next year. Since then has lived in Freiburg and/or high in Black Forest. Married, two children. Considered existentialist because of influence on Sartre, but denies it. Main concern is problem of Being, which he shows to be linked with time. Deeply interested in poet Hölderlin. Much influenced by Kierkegaard. Has added to current thought concepts of "care," "moods," and relation to death. Later writings emphasize that Being is the ground of ontology. Calls modern man to face directly the question of the "sense of Being," and believes plight of civilization due to "oblivion of Being."*

"Thought must descend once again into the poverty of its materials."

The editor of the volume in which our selection from Heidegger appears visited the philosopher in the Black Forest, reaching his hut after a long climb. He wrote afterward that with certain philosophers one feels communion, spiritual engagement, and so forth, but that Heidegger conveys "a spirit of overwhelming solitude."

We have said earlier that Martin Heidegger is a powerful voice in this century in opposition to Descartes. The latter gave currency to the idea of the self marked off from the world—the "subject" distinguished from the "object" by a procedure of rigorous doubt. In that view of things, the basic movement was from the center outward. It went from the self, about which one can be sure, to the nonself or objective world, about which everything is unsure; from the faith of the subject to the object of faith. Heidegger, on the other hand, getting under and beyond objective "beings," probes for "Being itself." This he gropes for with something of the same courageous depth we see in the probings of Descartes, though moving in an inverse direction.

Heidegger is a clear voice for the shifting cultural standards of the

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Heidegger's most influential work, Being and Time *(1927), was recently translated into English by J. Macquarrie and E. S. Robinson (1962). Other important works include* Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics *(1929),* What Is Metaphysics? *(1930), and* Introduction to Metaphysics *(1953).*

present century. Characteristic of our day are the post-Idealistic temper and the recognition that the subject is enmeshed in its world. Truth now reveals itself in the *relationship* between subject and object. The movement is from the obscurity of a fundamental but unseen relation, to an openness in which both subject and object, in their interrelationship, are uncovered.

Heidegger's great influence in our time is to direct men again to a kind of primordial thinking. The fundamental question is that of *Being*, the basic reality of all that is.[1] This philosopher, however, pursues the question in a manner quite different from the approaches of the last two thousand years. Being itself is not to be thought of—is not available to man—as an abstract possibility. Man has to do only with the kind of being that exists within his own limited, temporal, and fallen human condition. "Thought must descend once again into the poverty of its materials."[2]

Heidegger distinguishes between two kinds of truth: *veritas* and *aletheia*. *Veritas* is the traditional metaphysical approach to truth. Here an effort is made to capture the fundamental trait or character of something in the form of a concept that can be stated. *Veritas* then looks for agreement between the concept and the thing. But traditional metaphysics treats the whole of reality only externally, as the sum total of the traits of myriad individual beings. It does not consider how Being itself is present in things and/or persons.

Truth as *aletheia* involves awareness of the more fundamental reality within which all objective thought takes place. Genuine truth goes beyond metaphysics to this relational ground of reality.[3] Metaphysics is involved in a confusion between *representation* and *truth*, between *veritas* and *aletheia*, between beings as beings and the *Being* in beings. This misunderstanding of what truth is, according to Heidegger, may be traced back far beyond Descartes. The habit of thinking of truth as *agreement between* the idea of a subject and an object which the subject experiences is at least two thousand years old. Both Plato and Aris-

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[1] See Heidegger's "The Fundamental Question of Metaphysics," in William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken, eds., *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1962). Also the Introduction to his *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. (London: SCM Press, 1962), which considers the question of the meaning of being.

[2] Quoted in the introductory essay on Heidegger in Barrett and Aiken, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 167.

[3] In *Being and Time* Heidegger uses the term *ontic* to refer to external agreement between thought and object, while *ontological* points to the way in which thought and object are more fundamentally interrelated. In the essay of our selection he clearly tries to state the distinction in a more radical way in order to avoid the misunderstanding incurred by the former work. Here he speaks of the *ontological* and the *ground of ontology*. Cf. Barrett and Aiken, *loc. cit.*

totle, says Heidegger, were mistaken in describing truth as primarily the agreement of a statement with the object about which it is made. This overlooks the interrelation between the two.[4]

More fundamentally seen, truth appears equally in the subjective assertion, in the object of it, and also in the uncovering of sameness between them. So conceived, it is neither wrung from the object nor imposed upon the subject. It comes as an original disclosure in which subject and object are open to each other in their interrelatedness.[5]

There has been an age-long confusion between truth as objective judgment and as inner disclosure. The result is that the whole metaphysical enterprise of Western thought has tended to block the involvement of the person in his world. Men find themselves "abandoned by Being," even though the very abandonment is concealed by their traditional mode of thought. There has been a "fateful withdrawal" of the power and fullness of Being from human existence.[6] Man finds himself attempting to overcome an alienation from his world by means of metaphysical and scientific projects that only deepen it. What is needed is not more exertion, but a different starting point. People must once again become aware of the involvement of Being *within human being*, or existence.

Dasein is Heidegger's term for this involvement of Being in human nature. Man, he thinks, should stop looking for some sort of changeless essence outside the time-and-change sequence of human life. It is of the very nature of man to be in the midst of transition. The term *Dasein* implies both the involvement of Being in transient human existence and the essential relation of man to the presence of Being. Man dies, and it

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[4] Heidegger's essay, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," may also be found in Barrett and Aiken, Vol. III.

[5] It is worthy of note that *Sein und Zeit* was never finished as projected. Heidegger turned his attention to a study of the poet Hölderlin, deciding that the project could not be completed. Without assessing the merits of the debate over the meaning of the change in the later Heidegger, one may suggest the possibility that *Sein und Zeit* became too much an attempt to force the truth from "being there," when the whole investigation was moving toward the conclusion that the fullness of truth comes in its being received and celebrated. The resolution and "care" of *Dasein* is originally and equally a gift as well as an act. Barrett is of the opinion that in this particular book the ambiguity is never resolved (Barrett and Aiken, *op. cit.*, pp. 162 f.). See also James M. Robinson and John G. Cobb, Jr., eds., *The Later Heidegger and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

[6] Heidegger's analysis is a penetrating expression of the postmetaphysical temper to which we have often referred. To the extent that Christendom is tied to traditional metaphysics, Heidegger anticipates those who speak of the post-Christian era. The "fateful withdrawal" of Being is certainly closely related to the "death of God." The clue Heidegger offers to theology is that it would be more accurate to speak of "withdrawal" or "abandonment" by God, rather than the "death of God."

is part of his nature that he can foresee his death. To care, to be open to an existence in which death is an ever-present anticipation, is to know the truth of Being.

Truth always exists within the limits and possibilities of *Dasein*. It is always known within the horizon of "thrownness, projection, and falling."[7] "Thrownness" is a term technically reminiscent of the potter and his loose wet clay as it is "thrown" on the wheel. It refers to the fact that the individual finds himself in some concrete setting in life, into which he has been born without any choice of his own. He is always part of an existing world—this can never be escaped. Thus *Dasein* discovers itself as having already been *thrown* into its world. To speak of an abstract subject without a world around it, therefore, is—as one can easily see—a mere abstraction.

Man knows that he has a future. This *projection* ahead of *Dasein* is more than merely interesting. It is part of man's very essence in the present. *Dasein* is always coming into being, always a potential as well as an actuality. By planning and expecting, man lives ahead of himself as well as in the moment, and this being ahead of himself is a central part of being human. Whatever else it may be, truth is the openness of *Dasein* to the future.

At the same time, the truth of one moment falls into mere appearance in the next. The passage of time covers truth over, buries it, so that again and again it must be discovered afresh. Thus *Dasein* finds itself *falling* away, even while—and although—it is open to the future. Because *Dasein* moves away from itself, is involved in changing and becoming and disappearing, truth both shows and conceals itself, both yields itself and withdraws. Truth and untruth are two constant potentialities for man: two ongoing modes, it might be said, of "being in the world."

Heidegger's use of language and effort to think in primordial terms —almost below the threshold of normal conscious thought—make him formidably difficult to read. Our selection from him should be considered in context. In 1927 the philosopher published the first part of his major projected work, *Being and Time*. This was followed two years later by an essay entitled "What Is Metaphysics?" which dealt with some of the same problems as the first volume. But the essay itself also proved controversial and was much criticized. In 1943 Heidegger added to it a postscript of nine pages, together with editorial material and other short pieces (to a total length of four hundred pages). These combined writings appeared in English under the title *Existence and Being*. The essay reproduced here is a new one, especially written by Heidegger as an introduction to the fifth reprinting of this latter volume, in 1949. It is called "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics."

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[7] Cf. *Being and Time*, Part One, §V.

This history will account for the persistent atmosphere, in what follows, of effort to clear up misunderstanding. There is a recurrent justification of statements formerly made and terms used. Again we beg the reader's indulgence for a rather long exposition in the interest of whatever clarity we can achieve with this difficult but most stimulating thinker.

Going back to Descartes' figure of philosophy as a tree with roots, trunk, and branches, Heidegger begins his outline of a new approach to metaphysics by probing the ground in which those same roots take hold. What is this ground? What ingredients rise, like sap, to nourish this tree? What, indeed, is metaphysics fundamentally?

It is concerned with beings. Plural. Wherever the nature of "beings" comes in question, there we are in the midst of metaphysics. True, we see these beings by the light of Being. But this does not concern metaphysics except that we recognize it as the light we see by. Metaphysics does not concern itself with Being; only with beings and their nature.

Yet whatever definition of beings we may prefer—spiritualistic, matter and force, idea, will, substance, "becoming," energy, or the "ceaseless recurrence of events"—we always see them in the light of Being. It somehow enters into the light we see by. How it enters into metaphysics and creates a visibility there, so to speak—an unconcealedness and a revelation—is obscure. Yet when metaphysics gives answers about beings, it speaks (often without knowing it) out of the revealedness, the exposure, of Being itself. This may therefore reasonably be called the ground from which these metaphysical roots are nourished.

Here Heidegger, like a true countryman, describes the relation of the roots to the earth. For anyone familiar with growing things it is a compelling description. And we see that the study of metaphysics does not lead us to Being. The tree "always leaves its ground." It does not turn back to concentrate on the earth from which it springs, yet can never wholly get away from it. A thinker, when he wants to explore Being, in a sense leaves the field of metaphysics. He goes back into the ground. When he does so, he discovers that the ground itself is something more than just a soil for metaphysics to grow in. And the essence of metaphysics, in turn, is something other than he knew.

Such thinking does not try to pull up the tree of philosophy by the roots. On the contrary, it tills and cultivates the soil. The metaphysical root system remains. Yet it does not quite reach the basis of thinking. When we get down to the truth of Being, metaphysics is "overcome," or overtaken. We have gone beyond it. It can no longer claim to describe our fundamental involvement in Being, or all relationships to beings as such. To say this is not at all to abolish metaphysics, which is an understanding of the nature of man. But if we go back down into the ground of metaphysics, we may find that this brings about a change in our

understanding of human nature and a transformation of metaphysics itself.

The word "overcoming" used above means *going past metaphysics to recall Being itself* (italics our own). It means going *beyond* the tradition that forgets the ground because of interest in the tree. Heidegger's earlier *Being and Time* set out to do this. What prompts this aim of "overcoming" metaphysics and going deeper is not just thought. It is a prompting from Being itself. That Being, and its relation to man, stir his thinking to respond and correspond to it.

And what is the purpose of this "overcoming"? Is it to fortify philosophy by more basic roots? Or replace metaphysics altogether as the root of the tree? Is it to change the general rules of philosophy, or show that its ground is not wholly sure—that it cannot be considered an absolute science?

None of these. Something else is at stake in discovery of the truth of Being or its nondiscovery. This is nothing less than the question whether Being can make itself felt directly in human nature. Or must metaphysics forever stand in the way of man's showing forth the direct radiance of Being itself? Here Heidegger seems to see metaphysics as a kind of *maya* or illusion of shapes of things in the world.

The fact is, metaphysics talks about Being and proceeds on certain assumptions about it. But it does not "induce Being to speak," or "recall truth as unconcealedness, nor does it recognize the nature of unconcealedness." Yet *unconcealedness* may be more fundamental than the whole type of truth set forth by metaphysics. *Aletheia* may be a good word for this hitherto unrecognized element in the nature of existence. It is something the representational thinking of metaphysics will never reach. Nor will studies of pre-Socratic thinking—the attempt is an absurdity. What we need is a recognition of the hitherto unexpressed nature of unconcealedness. For this is how Being presents itself. Yet this truth of Being has remained hidden from the time of Anaximander to Nietzsche.

The strange thing is that metaphysics even pretends to ask and answer questions about Being. Yet it never does really say anything about the truth of Being, for it never asks that question directly. It thinks only in terms of beings (plural, and formed). When it alludes to Being, it means the totality of all beings. Its propositions all involve this confusion of Being and beings. And this is not merely a casual mistake: a carelessness of expression or minor negligence of thought. It is highly significant. Indeed, the assumption that metaphysics really deals with Being has brought the world's thinking into complete error. For by the way in which it thinks of beings—as plural forms and separate individuals—metaphysics seems to make itself a major barrier to the involvement

of Being in human nature. (Here we begin to sense the reason for Heidegger's use of the word "overcome," rather than just "going beyond." There *is* something here to be overcome, even very hard to accomplish.)

Now, what if this lack of understanding and involvement, and our unawareness of it, have determined the whole character of the modern age? What if the absence of Being from his nature leaves man more and more to mere "beings," without knowing that something is lacking? What if this tendency has been developing for a long time, and is destined to become still more powerful?

If this is so, have we any reason to congratulate ourselves on the age we live in?[8] If this "oblivion of Being" were indeed the case, would not a thoughtful person who knows or remembers something of Being experience genuine horror? Horror, and dread——He would have first to face it, and then what could his realization accomplish but to endure it? Even this much clarity would be impossible so long as we think in terms of a "mood of depression." Yet what has dread at the absence of Being to do with notions of modern psychology or psychoanalysis?

Suppose the "overcoming" of metaphysics involved an awareness of this oblivion of Being—perhaps a need to experience it, face it, and thus draw the recognition of that withdrawal into the present state of the involvement of Being in man. Suppose there were a need to keep the awareness lively and keen. In that case, in the distress of this oblivion, the question "What is metaphysics?" might become the most urgent in the world.

Thus everything depends on our thinking becoming more thoughtful. *Not* more energetic, but with a different point of origin. The representational thinking that deals with beings as such must be replaced by a different kind, brought about by Being itself and responsive to it.

Representational thinking is only a metaphysical study of forms and beings. It cannot be made useful for action in everyday life. The more our thinking becomes adequate to the involvement of Being in it, the more purely it will be a recalling of Being. This is for the most part beyond us. We invent. To try to lead the way, create a path, to a kind of thinking capable of recalling Being itself, in its truth—this was in fact the purpose of Heidegger's original volume, *Being and Time*. To get at the truth of Being, one must stop and think about human nature. The experience of the "oblivion of Being" was not mentioned in that volume, since it had not yet been demonstrated. But that experience,

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[8] Note that this was published in 1949, a few years before some of our recent somber preoccupations became so acute as to make self-congratulation a less usual frame of mind.

Heidegger says, makes us suspect, in view of the unconcealedness of Being, that an essential part of Being is its involvement in human nature. This cannot become an explicit question until one has made every attempt to free the definition of human nature from concepts of subjectivity and the *animal rationale.*

An expressive single term for the involvement of Being in human nature, and for the essential relation of man to the openness—the "thereness"—of Being as such, is *Dasein* ("being there"). This was chosen in spite of the fact that it is used in metaphysics for the different meaning of *existentia* (actuality, reality, objectivity) and in the further German usage of *menschliches Dasein* [human existence]. Any attempt to think through the meaning of Heidegger's earlier *Being and Time* is frustrated so long as one thinks *Dasein* is used there for "consciousness."

As if this were a mere matter of casual shifting around from one word to another! As if there were no great issue at stake! We have somehow to get people to think about the involvement of Being in human nature. Thus they may arrive at an experience of human nature which will prove adequate for the present inquiry. *Dasein* is not used for "consciousness." *Dasein,* or "being there," refers to what must be first experienced and then thought of as a *place*: the location of the truth of Being.

Can the meaning of *Dasein* be more directly stated? In what way is Being itself involved in human nature? Heidegger's answer is that "The 'essence' of being there lies in its existence." Here one must be careful to remember that "existence" is used in *Being and Time* to refer exclusively to man. Because he is conscious of his own existence, man has a special relationship to Being that is not shared by rocks, trees, horses, and angels. The essence of human existence, so to speak, is that here is where Being itself, in its openness, "both manifests and conceals itself, yields itself and withdraws." Yet this without exhausting itself or being completed in any one event.

What then is existence? Is it not some mode of Being? To exist means to endure, to "stand it." But more fundamentally stated, to exist means to "care." Man is a being who cares. "Standing it" and "caring" are not simply ways of being, outside the circle of self-consciousness, or we would simply be returning to a Cartesian subjectiveness. They are rather ways of being in the "unconcealedness in which Being itself is present." To stand in the openness of Being is to endure, to care, and to receive death as the boundary of one's life.

Man alone is conscious of beings, which he can represent in his thoughts. Man's existence is the basis of his consciousness of the beings that make up his world. He is himself involved in the Being from which the beings of the world come to be. That is, he stands both within it and outside of it. When man's existence is defined only in terms of

self-consciousness, or selfhood, he is unavoidably detached from himself and from his world. He is abandoned by Being. Man's need then is not for a recovery of selfhood, but for recovery of openness to Being itself, the basis for his relation to all beings.

Being and Time was so named, in its paired title, not in one of the usual pairings of the word with something that limits and contrasts with it (Being and Becoming, Being and Seeming, etc.). Time is here a *part* of Being, "the first name of the truth of Being." The real ancient meaning of "being" (now lost to our feeling), is *to be present.* This is inherent—implicit—in the earliest names for Being.

Here the element of Time is involved, concealed and unrecognized: both present time and duration. Time indicates the unconcealedness, the truth of Being. This is a different sort of time from the metaphysical concept of the changing life of beings. Throughout the age of metaphysics, Time is present in the history of Being, unrecognized and unthought-of.

In the effort to get from the idea of beings to Being itself, the element that comes from metaphysics is understanding, which usually has to do with representational thought. But when it comes to the truth of Being in human nature, understanding has to be of the unconcealedness of Being. And the sphere that opens up here should be called, rather, "sense." The "sense" of Being and the truth of Being are the same.

If Time is part of the truth of Being in a way that is still concealed, then every project, or way of understanding, that holds open the truth of Being "must look out into Time as the horizon of any possible understanding of Being."

All philosophy has fallen into the "oblivion of Being." That was the real point of the book, *Being and Time.* There could be no better proof of this than the somnambulistic way in which philosophy, in considering the book, passed over the real and only question at stake in it. And this shows, further, that what is involved is not a series of misunderstandings merely, but our abandonment by Being itself.

Metaphysics represents beings in two ways: their totality as universal traits; and their totality as the highest, therefore divine being. Metaphysics is therefore both ontology (the science of reality) and theology. The latter does not derive from early Christian thought, as people are apt to suppose, but from a meaning implicit in the Greek *on* (as in "ontology") to begin with. This referred to the way in which beings "disconcealed themselves." This "unconcealedness," says Heidegger, is what made it possible for Christian thought to take hold of Greek philosophy. And when, he asks plaintively, will we take St. Paul seriously as to the wisdom of the world that God turns into foolishness, and realize the folly in the conception of philosophy?

Here the writer returns more closely to the thread of his earlier re-

marks about *Dasein*. Metaphysics cannot help its twofold nature, since it is the representation of beings as beings. Metaphysics is automatically excluded from the experience of Being. This is because it has its eye always on beings as manifested and never notices what conceals itself in this reality. So it is necessary to make a fresh start in knowing what is involved in "Being," or the Greek *on*. Thus, Heidegger says, he has reintroduced the question into human thinking. It is no mere repetition of the Platonic-Aristotelian question. What we are asking about is what conceals itself in the *on*.

Metaphysics is founded on this. The attempt to move back into what conceals itself here might reasonably be called "fundamental ontology." But that is inappropriate, for it would be just like any metaphysical inquiry into the truth of *beings*. The attempt to recall the truth of Being is very different. It goes "back into the ground of metaphysics, and with its first step it immediately leaves the realm of all ontology." Yet any philosophy concerned with transcendence remains an "ontology," even with new foundations, and even if it seems to reject ontology altogether. The very thinking by which we should be probing toward the truth of Being gets entangled in these traditional concepts. Both for preliminary orientation and in order to make a transition to a new kind of thinking, therefore, nothing is more urgent than the question: "What Is Metaphysics?"

Heidegger comments on the unfolding of this question in the earlier lecture to which this is a new introduction. There it culminated in still another question, the most basic in all metaphysics. Why is there any being at all and not rather Nothing? Since the first publication of that lecture much has been said about dread, about Nothing, and so on. But the question perversely weaves its way back to metaphysical ideas, and the attempt to recall Being is lost sight of.

However, the question as Heidegger puts it does not really concern the metaphysical end of the query. It concerns the Nothing. We are not bound to think always within the limits of conventional metaphysics. Suppose instead we try to recall the "truth of Being" out of the ground and truth of metaphysics. One may well ask, then, why *beings* take precedence everywhere and "lay claim to every 'is,'" while that which is not *a* being but Being itself "is understood as nothing and remains forgotten."

Is this perhaps the reason for the still prevailing assumption in metaphysics that "Being" may always be taken for granted, and that "Nothing is therefore more easily made than beings"? It is indeed, or Leibniz could not have made his famous remark that "the nothing is simpler and easier than any thing."

Says Heidegger: "What is more enigmatic: that beings are, or that Being is? Or does even this reflection fail to bring us close to that enigma

which has occurred with the Being of beings?" The writer concludes by remarking that the time has come to think through his earlier lecture, "What Is Metaphysics?" (so long subject to attack and misunderstanding, and in 1949 once more being reprinted), with *its* end in view—not some imaginary end or purpose.

The piece we have been exploring was chosen by Heidegger himself to represent him in the volume on existentialism cited below, for which it was newly translated, with the philosopher's advice on the use of terms. The entire essay follows.

(Reprinted from Martin Heidegger, "The Way Back into the Ground of Metaphysics," in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre,* Walter Kaufmann, ed., trans., and intro. [Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1956], pp. 207–221. Copyright © 1956 by The World Publishing Company.)

THE WAY BACK INTO THE GROUND OF METAPHYSICS

Descartes, writing to Picot, who translated the *Principia Philosophiae* into French, observed: "Thus the whole of philosophy is like a tree: the roots are metaphysics, the trunk is physics, and the branches that issue from the trunk are all the other sciences . . ." (*Opp. ed. Ad. et Ta.* IX, 14)

Sticking to this image, we ask: In what soil do the roots of the tree of philosophy have their hold? Out of what ground do the roots—and through them the whole tree—receive their nourishing juices and strength? What element, concealed in the ground, enters and lives in the roots that support and nourish the tree? What is the basis and element of metaphysics? What is metaphysics, viewed from its ground? What is metaphysics itself, at bottom?

Metaphysics thinks about beings as beings. Wherever the question is asked what beings are, beings as such are in sight. Metaphysical representation owes this sight to the light of Being. The light itself, i.e., that which such thinking experiences as light, does not come within the range of metaphysical thinking: for metaphysics always represents beings only as beings. Within this perspective, metaphysical thinking does, of course, inquire about the being which is the source and originator of this light. But the light itself is considered sufficiently illuminated as soon as we recognize that we look through it whenever we look at beings.

In whatever manner beings are interpreted—whether as spirit, after the fashion of spiritualism; or as matter and force, after the fashion of materialism; or as becoming and life, or idea, will, substance, subject, or *energeia;* or as the eternal recurrence of the same events—every time, beings as beings appear in the light of Being. Wherever metaphysics represents beings, Being has entered into the light. Being has arrived in a state

of unconcealedness (Ἀλήθεια). But whether and how Being itself involves such unconcealedness, whether and how it manifests itself in, and as, metaphysics, remains obscure. Being in its revelatory essence, i.e. in its truth, is not recalled. Nevertheless, when metaphysics gives answers to its question concerning beings as such, metaphysics speaks out of the unnoticed revealedness of Being. The truth of Being may thus be called the ground in which metaphysics, as the root of the tree of philosophy, is kept and from which it is nourished.

Because metaphysics inquires about beings as beings, it remains concerned with beings and does not devote itself to Being as Being. As the root of the tree, it sends all nourishment and all strength into the trunk and its branches. The root branches out in the soil to enable the tree to grow out of the ground and thus to leave it. The tree of philosophy grows out of the soil in which metaphysics is rooted. The ground is the element in which the root of the tree lives, but the growth of the tree is never able to absorb this soil in such a way that it disappears in the tree as part of the tree. Instead, the roots, down to the subtlest tendrils, lose themselves in the soil. The ground is ground for the roots, and in the ground the roots forget themselves for the sake of the tree. The roots still belong to the tree even when they abandon themselves, after a fashion, to the element of the soil. They squander themselves and their element on the tree. As roots, they do not devote themselves to the soil—at least not as if it were their life to grow only into this element and to spread out in it. Presumably, the element would not be the same element either if the roots did not live in it.

Metaphysics, insofar as it always represents only beings as beings, does not recall Being itself. Philosophy does not concentrate on its ground. It always leaves its ground—leaves it by means of metaphysics. And yet it never escapes its ground.

Insofar as a thinker sets out to experience the ground of metaphysics, insofar as he attempts to recall the truth of Being itself instead of merely representing beings as beings, his thinking has in a sense left metaphysics. From the point of view of metaphysics, such thinking goes back into the ground of metaphysics. But what still appears as ground from this point of view is presumably something else, once it is experienced in its own terms—something as yet unsaid, according to which the essence of metaphysics, too, is something else and not metaphysics.

Such thinking, which recalls the truth of Being, is no longer satisfied with mere metaphysics, to be sure; but it does not oppose and think against metaphysics either. To return to our image, it does not tear up the root of philosophy. It tills the ground and plows the soil for this root. Metaphysics remains the basis of philosophy. The basis of thinking, however, it does not reach. When we think of the truth of Being, metaphysics is overcome. We can no longer accept the claim of metaphysics

that it takes care of the fundamental involvement in "Being" and that it decisively determines all relations to beings as such. But this "overcoming of metaphysics" does not abolish metaphysics. As long as man remains the *animal rationale* he is also the *animal metaphysicum*. As long as man understands himself as the rational animal, metaphysics belongs, as Kant said, to the nature of man. But if our thinking should succeed in its efforts to go back into the ground of metaphysics, it might well help to bring about a change in human nature, accompanied by a transformation of metaphysics.

If, as we unfold the question concerning the truth of Being, we speak of overcoming metaphysics, this means: recalling Being itself. Such recalling goes beyond the tradition of forgetting the ground of the root of philosophy. The thinking attempted in *Being and Time* (1927) sets out on the way to prepare an overcoming of metaphysics, so understood. That, however, which prompts such thinking can only be that which is so to be recalled. That Being itself and how Being itself concerns our thinking does not depend upon our thinking alone. That Being itself, and the manner in which Being itself, strikes a man's thinking, that rouses his thinking and stirs it to rise from Being itself to respond and correspond to Being as such.

Why, however, should such an overcoming of metaphysics be necessary? Is the point merely to underpin that discipline of philosophy which was the root hitherto, or to supplant it with a yet more basic discipline? Is it a question of changing the philosophic system of instruction? No. Or are we trying to go back into the ground of metaphysics in order to uncover a hitherto overlooked presupposition of philosophy, and thereby to show that philosophy does not yet stand on an unshakable foundation and therefore cannot yet be the absolute science? No.

It is something else that is at stake with the arrival of the truth of Being or its failure to arrive: it is neither the state of philosophy nor philosophy itself alone, but rather the proximity or remoteness of that from which philosophy, insofar as it means the representation of beings as such, receives its nature and its necessity. What is to be decided is nothing less than this: can Being itself, out of its own unique truth, bring about its involvement in human nature; or shall metaphysics, which turns its back to its ground, prevent further that the involvement of Being in man may generate a radiance out of the very essence of this involvement itself—a radiance which might lead man to belong to Being?

In its answers to the question concerning beings as such, metaphysics operates with a prior conception of Being. It speaks of Being necessarily and hence continually. But metaphysics does not induce Being to speak, for metaphysics does not recall Being in its truth, nor does it recall truth as unconcealedness, nor does it recall the nature of unconcealedness. To metaphysics the nature of truth always appears only in the derivative

form of the truth of knowledge and the truth of propositions which formulate our knowledge. Unconcealedness, however, might be prior to all truth in the sense of *veritas*. Ἀλήθεια might be the word that offers a hitherto unnoticed hint concerning the nature of *esse* which has not yet been recalled. If this should be so, then the representational thinking of metaphysics could certainly never reach this nature of truth, however zealously it might devote itself to historical studies of pre-Socratic philosophy; for what is at stake here is not some renaissance of pre-Socratic thinking: any such attempt would be vain and absurd. What is wanted is rather some regard for the arrival of the hitherto unexpressed nature of unconcealedness, for it is in this form that Being has announced itself. Meanwhile the truth of Being has remained concealed from metaphysics during its long history from Anaximander to Nietzsche. Why does metaphysics not recall it? Is the failure to recall it merely a function of some kinds of metaphysical thinking? Or is it an essential feature of the fate of metaphysics that its own ground eludes it because in the rise of unconcealedness its very core, namely concealedness, stays away in favor of the unconcealed which appears in the form of beings?

Metaphysics, however, speaks continually and in the most various ways of Being. Metaphysics gives, and seems to confirm, the appearance that it asks and answers the question concerning Being. In fact, metaphysics never answers the question concerning the truth of Being, for it never asks this question. Metaphysics does not ask this question because it thinks of Being only by representing beings as beings. It means all beings as a whole, although it speaks of Being. It refers to Being and means beings as beings. From its beginning to its completion, the propositions of metaphysics have been strangely involved in a persistent confusion of beings and Being. This confusion, to be sure, must be considered an event and not a mere mistake. It cannot by any means be charged to a mere negligence of thought or a carelessness of expression. Owing to this persistent confusion, the claim that metaphysics poses the question of Being lands us in utter error.

Due to the manner in which it thinks of beings, metaphysics almost seems to be, without knowing it, the barrier which keeps man from the original involvement of Being in human nature.

What if the absence of this involvement and the oblivion of this absence determined the entire modern age? What if the absence of Being abandoned man more and more exclusively to beings, leaving him forsaken and far from any involvement of Being in his nature, while this forsakenness itself remained veiled? What if this were the case—and had been the case for a long time now? What if there were signs that this oblivion will become still more decisive in the future?

Would there still be occasion for a thoughtful person to give himself

arrogant airs in view of this fateful withdrawal with which Being presents us? Would there still be occasion, if this should be our situation, to deceive ourselves with pleasant phantasms and to indulge, of all things, in an artificially induced elation? If the oblivion of Being which has been described here should be real, would there not be occasion enough for a thinker who recalls Being to experience a genuine horror? What more can his thinking do than to endure in dread this fateful withdrawal, while first of all facing up to the oblivion of Being? But how could thought achieve this as long as its fatefully granted dread seems to it no more than a mood of depression? What does such dread, which is fated by Being, have to do with psychology or psychoanalysis?

Suppose that the overcoming of metaphysics involved the endeavor to commence with a regard for the oblivion of Being—the attempt to learn to develop such a regard, in order to experience this oblivion and to absorb this experience into the involvement of Being in man, and to preserve it there: then, in the distress of the oblivion of Being, the question "What is metaphysics?" might well become the most necessary necessity for thought.

Thus everything depends on this: that our thinking should become more thoughtful in its season. This is achieved when our thinking, instead of implementing a higher degree of exertion, is directed toward a different point of origin. The thinking which is posited by beings as such, and therefore representational and illuminating in that way, must be supplanted by a different kind of thinking which is brought to pass by Being itself and, therefore, responsive to Being.

All attempts are futile which seek to make representational thinking which remains metaphysical, and only metaphysical, effective and useful for immediate action in everyday public life. The more thoughtful our thinking becomes and the more adequate it is to the involvement of Being in it, the purer our thinking will stand *eo ipso* in the one action appropriate to it: recalling what is meant for it and thus, in a sense, what is already meant.

But who still recalls what is meant? One makes inventions. To lead our thinking on the way on which it may find the involvement of the truth of Being in human nature, to open up a path for our thinking on which it may recall Being itself in its truth—to do that the thinking attempted in *Being and Time* is "on its way." On this way—that is, in the service of the question concerning the truth of Being—it becomes necessary to stop and think about human nature; for the experience of the oblivion of Being, which is not specifically mentioned because it still had to be demonstrated, involves the crucial conjecture that in view of the unconcealedness of Being the involvement of Being in human nature is an essential feature of Being. But how could this conjecture, which is experi-

enced here, become an explicit question before every attempt had been made to liberate the determination of human nature from the concept of subjectivity and from the concept of the *animal rationale?* To characterize with a single term both the involvement of Being in human nature and the essential relation of man to the openness ("there") of Being as such, the name of "being there [*Dasein*]" was chosen for that sphere of being in which man stands as man. This term was employed, even though in metaphysics it is used interchangeably with *existentia,* actuality, reality, and objectivity, and although this metaphysical usage is further supported by the common [German] expression *"menschliches Dasein."* Any attempt, therefore, to rethink *Being and Time* is thwarted as long as one is satisfied with the observation that, in this study, the term "being there" is used in place of "consciousness." As if this were simply a matter of using different words! As if it were not the one and only thing at stake here: namely, to get men to think about the involvement of Being in human nature and thus, from our point of view, to present first of all an experience of human nature which may prove sufficient to direct our inquiry. The term "being there" neither takes the place of the term "consciousness" nor does the "object" designated as "being there" take the place of what we think when we speak of "consciousness." "Being there" names that which should first of all be experienced, and subsequently thought of, as a place—namely, the location of the truth of Being.

What the term "being there" means throughout the treatise on *Being and Time* is indicated immediately (page 42) by its introductory key sentence: *"The 'essence' of being there lies in its existence."* [*Das "Wesen" des Daseins liegt in seiner Existenz.*]

To be sure, in the language of metaphysics the word "existence" is a synonym of "being there": both refer to the reality of anything at all that is real, from God to a grain of sand. As long, therefore, as the quoted sentence is understood only superficially, the difficulty is merely transferred from one word to another, from "being there" to "existence." In *B. & T.* the term "existence" is used exclusively for the being of man. Once "existence" is understood rightly, the "essence" of being there can be recalled: in its openness, Being itself manifests and conceals itself, yields itself and withdraws; at the same time, this truth of Being does not exhaust itself in being there, nor can it by any means simply be identified with it after the fashion of the metaphysical proposition: all objectivity is as such also subjectivity.

What does "existence" mean in *B. & T.?* The word designates a mode of Being; specifically, the Being of those beings who stand open for the openness of Being in which they stand, by standing it. This "standing it," this enduring, is experienced under the name of "care." The ecstatic essence of being there is approached by way of care, and, conversely, care

is experienced adequately only in its ecstatic essence. "Standing it," experienced in this manner, is the essence of the *ekstasis* which must be grasped by thought. The ecstatic essence of existence is therefore still understood inadequtely as long as one thinks of it as merely "standing out," while interpreting the "out" as meaning "away from" the inside of an immanence of consciousness and spirit. For in this manner, existence would still be understood in terms of "subjectivity" and "substance"; while in fact, the "out" ought to be understood in terms of the openness of Being itself. The *stasis* of the ecstatic consists—strange as it may sound—in standing in the "out" and "there" of unconcealedness in which Being itself is present. What is meant by "existence" in the context of an inquiry that is prompted by, and directed toward, the truth of Being, can be most beautifully designated by the word "instancy [*Instandigkeit*]." We must think at the same time, however, of standing in the openness of Being, of enduring and outstanding this standing-in (care), and of out-braving the utmost (Being toward death); for it is only together that they constitute the full essence of existence.

The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. Rocks are, but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist. Horses are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but he does not exist. The proposition "man alone exists" does not mean by any means that man alone is a real being while all other beings are unreal and mere appearances or human ideas. The proposition "man exists" means: man is that being whose Being is distinguished by the open-standing standing-in in the unconcealedness of Being, from Being, in Being. The existential nature of man is the reason why man can represent beings as such, and why he can be conscious of them. All consciousness presupposes ecstatically understood existence as the *essentia* of man—*essentia* meaning that as which man is present insofar as he is man. But consciousness does not itself create the openness of beings, nor is it consciousness that makes it possible for man to stand open for beings. Whither and whence and in what free dimension could the intentionality of consciousness move, if instancy were not the essence of man in the first instance? What else could be the meaning—if anybody has ever seriously thought about this—of the word *sein* in the [German] words *Bewusstsein* ["consciousness"; literally: "being conscious"] and *Selbsbewusstsein* ["self-consciousness"] if it did not designate the existential nature of that which is in the mode of existence? To be a self is admittedly one feature of the nature of that being which exists; but existence does not consist in being a self, nor can it be defined in such terms. We are faced with the fact that metaphysical thinking understands man's selfhood in terms of substance or—and at bottom this amounts to the same—in terms of the subject. It is for this reason that the first way which leads away from metaphysics to

the ecstatic existential nature of man must lead through the metaphysical conception of human selfhood (*B. & T.*, §§63 and 64).

The question concerning existence, however, is always subservient to that question which is nothing less than the only question of thought. This question, yet to be unfolded, concerns the truth of Being as the concealed ground of all metaphysics. For this reason the treatise which sought to point the way back into the ground of metaphysics did not bear the title "Existence and Time," nor "Consciousness and Time," but *Being and Time*. Nor can this title be understood as if it were parallel to the customary juxtapositions of Being and Becoming, Being and Seeming, Being and Thinking, or Being and Ought. For in all these cases Being is limited, as if Becoming, Seeming, Thinking, and Ought did not belong to Being, although it is obvious that they are not nothing and thus belong to Being. In *Being and Time,* Being is not something other than Time: "Time" is called the first name of the truth of Being, and this truth is the presence of Being and thus Being itself. But why "Time" and "Being"?

By recalling the beginnings of history when Being unveiled itself in the thinking of the Greeks, it can be shown that the Greeks from the very beginning experienced the Being of beings as the presence of the present. When we translate εἶναι as "being," our translation is linguistically correct. Yet we merely substitute one set of sounds for another. As soon as we examine ourselves it becomes obvious that we neither think εἶναι, as it were, in Greek nor have in mind a correspondingly clear and univocal concept when we speak of "being." What, then, are we saying when instead of εἶναι we say "being," and instead of "being," εἶναι and *esse*? We are saying nothing. The Greek, Latin, and German word all remain equally obtuse. As long as we adhere to the customary usage we merely betray ourselves as the pacemakers of the greatest thoughtlessness which has ever gained currency in human thought and which has remained dominant until this moment. This εἶναι, however, means: to be present [*anwesen;* this verb form, in place of the idiomatic "*anwesend sein,*" is Heidegger's neology]. The true being of this being present [*das Wesen dieses Anwesens*] is deeply concealed in the earliest names of Being. But for us εἶναι and οὐσία as παρεῖ and ἀπουσία means this first of all: in being present there moves, unrecognized and concealed, present time and duration—in one word, Time. Being as such is thus unconcealed owing to Time. Thus Time points to unconcealedness, i.e., the truth of Being. But the Time of which we should think here is not experienced through the changeful career of beings. Time is evidently of an altogether different nature which neither has been recalled by way of the time concept of metaphysics nor ever can be recalled in this way. Thus Time becomes the first name, which is yet to be heeded, of the truth of Being, which is yet to be experienced.

A concealed hint of Time speaks not only out of the earliest metaphysical names of Being but also out of its last name, which is "the eternal recurrence of the same events." Through the entire epoch of metaphysics, Time is decisively present in the history of Being, without being recognized or thought about. To this Time, space is neither co-ordinated nor merely subordinated.

Suppose one attempts to make a transition from the representation of beings as such to recalling the truth of Being: such an attempt, which starts from this representation, must still represent, in a certain sense, the truth of Being, too; and any such representation must of necessity be heterogeneous and ultimately, insofar as it is a representation, inadequate for that which is to be thought. This relation, which comes out of metaphysics and tries to enter into the involvement of the truth of Being in human nature, is called understanding. But here understanding is viewed, at the same time, from the point of view of the unconcealedness of Being. Understanding is a pro-ject thrust forth and ecstatic, which means that it stands in the sphere of the open. The sphere which opens up as we project, in order that something (Being in this case) may prove itself as something (in this case, Being as itself in its unconcealedness), is called the sense. (Cf. *B. & T.*, p. 151.) "The sense of Being" and "the truth of Being" mean the same.

Let us suppose that Time belongs to the truth of Being in a way that is still concealed: then every project that holds open the truth of Being, representing a way of understanding Being, must look out into Time as the horizon of any possible understanding of Being. (Cf. *B. & T.*, §§31–34 and 68.)

The preface to *Being and Time*, on the first page of the treatise, ends with these sentences: "To furnish a concrete elaboration of the question concerning the sense of 'Being' is the intention of the following treatise. The interpretation of Time as the horizon of every possible attempt to understand Being is its provisional goal."

All philosophy has fallen into the oblivion of Being which has, at the same time, become and remained the fateful demand on thought in *B. & T.*; and philosophy could hardly have given a clearer demonstration of the power of this oblivion of Being than it has furnished us by the somnambulistic assurance with which it has passed by the real and only question of *B. & T.* What is at stake here is, therefore, not a series of misunderstandings of a book but our abandonment by Being.

Metaphysics states what beings are as beings. It offers a λόγος (statement) about the ὄντα (beings). The later title "ontology" characterizes its nature, provided, of course, that we understand it in accordance with its true significance and not through its narrow scholastic meaning. Metaphysics moves in the sphere of the ὄν ᾗ ὄν: it deals with beings as beings.

In this manner, metaphysics always represents beings as such in their totality; it deals with the beingness of beings (the οὐσία of the ὄν). But metaphysics represents the beingness of beings [*die Seiendheit des Seienden*] in a twofold manner: in the first place, the totality of beings as such with an eye to their most universal traits (ὄν καθάλου, κοινόν;) but at the same time also the totality of beings as such in the sense of the highest and therefore divine being (ὄν καθάλου, ἀκρότατον, θεῖον). In the metaphysics of Aristotle, the unconcealedness of beings as such has specifically developed in this twofold manner. (Cf. Met. Γ, E, K.)

Because metaphysics represents beings as beings, it is, two-in-one, the truth of beings in their universality and in the highest being. According to its nature, it is at the same time ontology in the narrower sense and theology. This onto-theological nature of philosophy proper (πρώτη φιλοσοφία) is, no doubt, due to the way in which the ὄν opens up in it, namely as ὄν. Thus the theological character of ontology is not merely due to the fact that Greek metaphysics was later taken up and transformed by the ecclesiastic theology of Christianity. Rather it is due to the manner in which beings have from the very beginning disconcealed themselves. It was this unconcealedness of beings that provided the possibility for Christian theology to take possession of Greek philosophy—whether for better or for worse may be decided by the theologians, on the basis of their experience of what is Christian; only they should keep in mind what is written in the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians: "οὐχὶ ἐμῶρανεν ὁ θεός τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου; Has not God let the wisdom of this world becomes foolishness?" (I Cor. 1:20) The σοφία τοῦ κόσμου (wisdom of this world), however, is that which, according to 1:22, the Ἕλληνες ζητοῦσιν, the Greeks seek. Aristotle even calls the πρώτη φιλοσοφία (philosophy proper) quite specifically ζητουμένη—what is sought. Will Christian theology make up its mind one day to take seriously the word of the apostle and thus also the conception of philosophy as foolishness?

As the truth of beings as such, metaphysics has a two-fold character. The reason for this twofoldness, however, let alone its origin, remains unknown to metaphysics; and this is no accident, nor due to mere neglect. Metaphysics has this twofold character because it is what it is: the representation of beings as beings. Metaphysics has no choice. Being metaphysics it is by its very nature excluded from the experience of Being; for it always represents beings (ὄν) only with an eye to what of Being has already manifested itself as being (ᾗ ὄν). But metaphysics never pays attention to what has concealed itself in this very ὄν insofar as it became unconcealed.

Thus the time came when it became necessary to make a fresh attempt to grasp by thought what precisely is said when we speak of ὄν or use the

word "being" [*seiend*]. Accordingly, the question concerning the ὄν was reintroduced into human thinking. (Cf. *B. & T.*, Preface.) But this reintroduction is no mere repetition of the Platonic-Aristotelian question; instead it asks about that which conceals itself in the ὄν.

Metaphysics is founded upon that which conceals itself here as long as metaphysics studies the ὄν ᾗ ὄν. The attempt to inquire back into what conceals itself here seeks, from the point of view of metaphysics, the fundament of ontology. Therefore this attempt is called, in *Being and Time* (page 13) "fundamental ontology" [Fundamentalontologie]. Yet this title, like any title, is soon seen to be inappropriate. From the point of view of metaphysics, to be sure, it says something that is correct; but precisely for that reason it is misleading, for what matters is success in the transition from metaphysics to recalling the truth of Being. As long as this thinking calls itself "fundamental ontology" it blocks and obscures its own way with this title. For what the title "fundamental ontology" suggests is, of course, that the attempt to recall the truth of Being—and not, like all ontology, the truth of beings—is itself (seeing that it is called "fundamental ontology") still a kind of ontology. In fact, the attempt to recall the truth of Being sets out on the way back into the ground of metaphysics, and with its first step it immediately leaves the realm of all ontology. On the other hand, every philosophy which revolves around an indirect or direct conception of "transcendence" remains of necessity essentially an ontology, whether it achieves a new foundation of ontology or whether it assures us that it repudiates ontology as a conceptual freezing of experience.

Coming from the ancient custom of representing beings as such, the very thinking that attempted to recall the truth of Being became entangled in these customary conceptions. Under these circumstances it would seem that both for a preliminary orientation and in order to prepare the transition from representational thinking to a new kind of thinking recalls [*das andenkende Denken*] that nothing could be more necessary than the question: What is metaphysics?

The unfolding of this question in the following lecture culminates in another question. This is called the basic question of metaphysics: Why is there any being at all and not rather Nothing? Meanwhile [since this lecture was first published in 1929], to be sure, people have talked back and forth a great deal about dread and the Nothing, both of which are spoken of in this lecture. But one has never yet deigned to ask oneself why a lecture which moves from thinking of the truth of Being to the Nothing, and then tries from there to think into the nature of metaphysics, should claim that this question is the basic question of metaphysics. How can an attentive reader help feeling on the tip of his tongue an objection

which is far more weighty than all protests against dread and the Nothing? The final question provokes the objection that an inquiry which attempts to recall Being by way of the Nothing returns in the end to a question concerning beings. On top of that, the question even proceeds in the customary manner of metaphysics by beginning with a causal "Why?" To this extent, then, the attempt to recall Being is repudiated in favor of representational knowledge of beings on the basis of beings. And to make matters still worse, the final question is obviously the question which the metaphysician Leibniz posed in his *Principes de la nature et de la grace: Pourquoi il y a plutôt quelque chose que rien?*" [*Principles of Nature and of Grace:* "Why is there something rather than nothing?"] (Opp. ed. Gerh. tom. VI, 602.n. 7).

Does the lecture, then fall short of its intention? After all, this would be quite possible in view of the difficulty of effecting a transition from metaphysics to another kind of thinking. Does the lecture end up by asking Leibniz' metaphysical question about the supreme cause of all things that have being? Why, then, is Leibniz' name not mentioned, as decency would seem to require?

Or is the question asked in an altogether different sense? If it does not concern itself with beings and inquire about their first cause among all beings, then the question must begin from that which is not a being. And this is precisely what the question names, and it capitalizes the word: the Nothing. This is the sole topic of the lecture. The demand seems obvious that the end of the lecture should be thought through, for once, in its own perspective which determines the whole lecture. What has been called the basic question of metaphysics would then have to be understood and asked in terms of fundamental ontology as the question that comes out of the ground of metaphysics and as the question about this ground.

But if we grant this lecture that in the end it thinks in the direction of its own distinctive concern, how are we to understand this question?

The question is: Why is there any being at all and not rather Nothing? Suppose that we do not remain within metaphysics to ask metaphysically in the customary manner; suppose we recall the truth of Being out of the nature and the truth of metaphysics; then this might be asked as well: How did it come about that beings take precedence everywhere and lay claim to every "is" while that which is not a being is understood as Nothing, though it is Being itself, and remains forgotten? How did it come about that with Being It really is nothing and that the Nothing really is not? Is it perhaps from this that the as yet unshaken presumption has entered into all metaphysics that "Being" may simply be taken for granted and that Nothing is therefore made more easily than beings? That is in-

deed the situation regarding Being and Nothing. If it were different, then Leibniz could not have said in the same place by way of an explanation: *"Car le rien est plus simple et plus facile que quelque chose* [For the nothing is simpler and easier than any thing]."

What is more enigmatic: that beings are, or that Being is? Or does even this reflection fail to bring us close to that enigma which has occurred with the Being of beings?

Whatever the answer may be, the time should have ripened meanwhile for thinking through the lecture "What is Metaphysics?" which has been subjected to so many attacks, from its end, for once—from *its* end and not from an imaginary end.

In a typical way in his various writings Heidegger has characterized the new understanding of truth that is gaining currency in the twentieth century. He points men again to their involvement in the world and the world's involvement in themselves. More than this, he shows how man exists temporally, remembering and forgetting, anticipating and caring. The problem is no longer to bridge the separation between subject and object, but to be sensitive to the way in which truth comes to be hidden or revealed, covered or uncovered.

Heidegger's influence can be traced in Bultmann's account of how authentic faith is open to the future, while inauthentic faith is closed to it. Paul Tillich speaks of ecstatic particpation in the depths of reason, using almost the same phrases as Heidegger. Barth speaks of standing in the circle of Jesus Christ in a way that is in some sense analogous to Heidegger's description of Being itself. Bonhoeffer too, though very critical of Heidegger, writes of the Christ in a way that cuts through the subject-object dichtomoy.

Yet we find Heidegger's more obscure ontological speculations less helpful. Here he actually seems to depart from his own counsel—"thought must descend once again into poverty of its materials." Instead he wanders into a highly speculative realm. This does not seem as useful in the long run as careful attention to the way man functions with his fellow man in his changing history. Christianity gives a more particular name to human existence—the name of Jesus of Nazareth. One cannot help wondering whether Heidegger's rather abstract description of care and the facing of death is in any way related to his lack of articulate protest in the face of the Nazi rise to power in the 1930's. It is noteworthy that those who were most critical of the political trends of that fateful era—Barth, Bonhoeffer, Tillich—understood human existence concretely in terms of the revelational character of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

6. Paul Tillich

1886-1966

(*For bibliographical notes and brief bibliography, see p. 259.*)

"The criterion of the truth of faith is whether or not it is alive."

"Faith has truth in so far as it adequately expresses ultimate concern."

"Faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy."

Tillich introduces the volume from which our present selection is taken as follows:

"There is hardly a word in the religious language, both theological and popular, which is subject to more misunderstandings, distortions and questionable definitions than the word 'faith.' It belongs to those terms which need healing before they can be used for the healing of men. . . . It confuses, misleads, creates alternately skepticism and fanaticism, intellectual resistance and emotional surrender, rejection of genuine religion and subjection to substitutes. . . . So, for the time being, the only way of dealing with the problem is to try to reinterpret the word and remove the confusing and distorting connotations. . . ."

In many ways Paul Tillich stands as a bridge between those who have a vision of truth and those for whom man's limitations completely darken the possibility of such a vision. He serves—purposely—as a link between those who have a fundamental intuition of reality and those who see life as something alienated and absurd. Schleiermacher described a "sensible self-consciousness" mixed with the feeling of absolute dependence. Tillich's thought similarly involves both a polarity between subject and object, and a state of ultimate concern that cuts under this difference. In some ways he is quite close to Kierkegaard's description of faith as an "objective uncertainty held with absolute passion." He also has similarities to Jonathan Edwards: For both thinkers the presence of Being is marked by "affectional" and "existential" elements of passion, courage, and despair.

Like some of his contemporaries, Heidegger in particular, Tillich directs us to a kind of "primal thinking" that does not remain tied to the old subject-object dichotomy. Modern scientific control of the object by the (detached) subject is the result of long development of a type of technical reasoning that concerns itself overwhelmingly with immediate tools. It does not deal with ultimate human goals. Descartes' thinking self surrounded by a measurable outer world sounded the keynote for the contemporary understanding of "reason." Tillich points out, in a way

somehow reminiscent of Heidegger, that this use of the word has almost suffocated any notion of what human reason really is in its deeper dimensions. In the modern world it is losing its power to find expression in art, literature, language, or culture; or to grasp and in turn be shaped by ultimate purpose. Human reason in its best and deepest sense is not realized until its "ecstatic" as well as practical potentialities are expressed.

Technical reason will be hollow and empty until it is opened to the "depths" of reality. By this distinction between technical and more profound uses of reason Tillich points to the kind of truth that moves beneath, yet within, the subject-object division.[1] The deeper kind of reason "is identical with the humanity of man in contrast with all other beings," and is "the source of meaning, of structure" and "the basis of hope, of freedom, of creativity." Only a being "who has the structure of reason is able to be ultimately concerned."

Though he calls for a return to primal thinking and speaks as one who has a vision of reality, Tillich does not rest his case solely on a description of the essential nature of being. Whatever one says about the *esse* or nature of reality will always be an abstraction, he feels, in view of the fragmentary character of man's finite experience. All sense of ultimate reality must be received through human experience, phases of human existence. One cannot speak in a detached way of the attributes of God. One must rather describe the experience of revelation. God is to be understood as both the ground and the object of man's ultimate concern.[2] Subject and object are still always estranged or separated from each other. This involves a split in the basic unity of man and his world, and for the subject the loss of his own selfhood. This alienation is part of the fundamental condition of man's life.[3] When he is grasped by an ultimate concern, purpose, and direction, the separation is partially healed—redeemed—though it cannot be totally removed in this life.

Truth, according to Tillich, is not a matter of objective certainties. It is far more a question of recognizing a power present in the fallen state of human life. The real issue is how to avoid expressing—and having—ultimate concern for things whose importance is *only* objective and relatively slight.[4] To be *in the truth* is to be lifted and shaken by the living

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[1] By "technical" Tillich understands reason that "provides for means" ("tools for recognizing and controlling reality") but "not for ends" (the direction faith gives, "in which this control may be exercised"). The two concepts are discussed in his *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951–63), Vol. I, pp. 71–80, under the topic, "The Structure of Reason." See also his *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), chap. V.

[2] *Systematic Theology*, pp. 211–15; *Dynamics of Faith*, chap. I.

[3] See Tillich's discussion on "Self-Loss" and "World-Loss" in *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, pp. 59–78.

[4] The power of the demonic is discussed *ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 103–106.

presence of ultimate reality. To know the truth is *to be known* by that which transcends the subject-object opposition.

Tillich has a good deal to say about symbols. The truth of faith lives in and through "symbolic" interpretation. A symbol has a dual character. It is known technically, just as all other objects are known. It may also express a primal reality that lives in and through the subject-object division.[5] So long as a symbol expresses primal thinking it is a living reality. When a great symbol becomes merely an object and is worshiped for its own sake, it loses capacity to give expression to the depths of reason.

In his description of the types of estrangement, Tillich concludes that all symbolic expressions of ultimate reality are subject to distortion. The only adequate symbol for faith is one that fully takes into account the alienation of life in the world. Here lies the power of the cross to give symbolic expression to the truth of faith. It points to the fact that the healing force of fundamental reality lives *within* the estrangement of human existence. An adequate symbol opens man's heart to the gift of "being accepted even though he is unacceptable."[6] It moves him to reunion with his truest and deepest inner self and with his neighbor, in the midst of the absurdity of existence.

In the following selection Tillich begins by noting the great variety of symbols and many contrasting types of faith. Can faith be judged in terms of truth?

Faith and reason are both part of the wholeness of man, spiritual elements which cannot be measured separately. They are "within each other" in him. Reason in its broader sense (unlike the shallower technical meaning) is what truly distinguishes humanity. It is the basis of language, freedom, art, moral commands, community life, and so forth. And it is the precondition of faith.

Inversely, faith "is the act in which reason reaches ecstatically beyond itself." Reason is finite, but not bound to its finitude. In the very fact of being aware of that, reason rises above it. Its true fulfillment is the presence of the ultimate, the holy. Unless it has this fulfillment, it exhausts itself in finite matters and becomes filled with demonic or irrational content. For no vacuum is possible in the spiritual life. "Faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy."

Theology has some questions here. Are not both faith and reason distorted by man's fallen state, his estrangement in the world? Must not their true nature be reestablished by "revelation"? Must not reason, there-

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[5] An excellent summary statement of Tillich's doctrine of symbol will be found in *Systematic Theology,* Vol. III, pp. 150–65.

[6] For an exploration of "the courage to accept acceptance" see Tillich's *The Courage To Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), chap. 6. The cross of Christ as a symbol of salvation is treated in *Systematic Theology,* Vol. III, pp. 150–65.

fore, subordinate itself to the pronouncements of revelation, and is this not the real meaning of faith?

The answer to this question is the whole discipline of theology. It cannot be brief. Yet one may say that man *is* in a state of alienation from his true nature. His use of reason and the quality of his faith are not what they should be. This leads to conflicts of many kinds. It is true that the alienation of reason and faith must be healed, and this happens in a revelatory experience. But "revelation" is a term commonly much misused, just as "reason" is. Real revelation is "first of all the experience in which an ultimate concern grasps the human mind." This gives rise to a flow of thought and symbols of action in which reason and faith are renewed, their conflicts overcome, and estrangement healed. In the transforming event, man's total structure is grasped and changed by ultimate concern.

Corruption, though broken, is not removed, but in time also enters the new experience. It confuses the ultimate with all manner of more immediate things—a movement toward unconscious idolatry. It again distorts the relation of faith and reason, making the latter supreme in the fight with corruption. The conflict with reason is a major symptom of corruption.

Nevertheless, there is no essential conflict between faith and the cognitive function. One must look into the relation of faith to the scientific, historical, and philosophical forms of reason. The truth of faith is different from each of these, but they all try to reach truth, the "really real." Here Tillich examines possible sources of error in the process of reason and the approaches to truth of these three disciplines as they have conflicted with faith.

Science precipitates a conflict chiefly because of a misunderstanding of the respective territories of faith and science. The two cannot really be in direct conflict, but only elements of science with science and elements of faith with faith. The same is true with psychology: the two perspectives of thought are not really bent on the same thing and so cannot basically conflict. Certain preliminary assumptions tacitly involved in Freud's work, for instance, are basically matters of faith. They have not yet been really examined in a scientific light, which would make this clear.

History is a different approach to truth, not subject to the endless repetitions of testing possible to science. Not only historical fact but interpretation also is involved. This in turn brings in participation, identification, and thus choices deriving from something very like faith. Inversely, the effort to prove the historical validity of the Bible is a disastrous distortion of the meaning of the truth of faith, intruding on the historical realm. Textual and historical questions cannot be judged in this way. Yet faith even in this situation has more than enough to say about

matters in which historical skills have no competence. Tillich proceeds eloquently to state some of these things.

Philosophical truth has a more complex relation to the truth of faith, although this again turns back to complicate the scientific and historical picture. Truth in philosophy involves true concepts about the ultimate. The truth of faith consists in true symbols concerning the ultimate. The writer explores this at some length. Directly compared, the truths of faith and of philosophy each shed an interesting light on certain aspects of the other. But they "have no authority over each other."

How, then, are we to judge the truth of faith? By the nature of faith itself, as a state of being "ultimately concerned." "From the subjective side one must say that faith is true if it adequately expresses an ultimate concern. From the objective side one must say that faith is true if its content is really ultimate." Thus Tillich justifies "all genuine symbols and types of faith" and also the history of religion in general.

As he goes on to define "adequacy," we note that "the relation of man to the ultimate undergoes changes." So do the symbols used to express it, and their vitality or liveliness. In a way, "the criterion of the truth of faith is whether or not it is alive."

As to ultimacy of faith, this stands in steady danger of corruption by man's tendency to idolatry. We see it in the way we absolutize rituals, personalities, doctrines—everything of lesser degree. Here Tillich quotes Calvin: "The human mind is a continuously working factory of idols," and goes on to say himself that every faith tends to "elevate its concrete symbols to absolute validity." The best symbol is the one that best expresses not only the ultimacy of faith, but the *non*ultimacy of itself as a symbol. In contrast to all other religions, Christianity does this well in the cross. The writer concludes by broadening his criteria of the truth of faith to a "Yes-and-No" that includes all man's history, in a Christian and Protestant view.

Tillich's *Dynamics of Faith* appeared in 1957 in the "World Perspectives" series. Our selection consists of Chapter V of that volume, in full.

V.
THE TRUTH OF FAITH

1. Faith and Reason

We have pointed to the limitless variety of symbols and to the many contrasting types of faith. This seems to imply a complete denial of the

claim these symbols and types have to truth. Therefore, we must now discuss the question whether, and in what sense, faith can be judged in terms of truth.

The most usual way in which this problem has been discussed is to contrast faith with reason, and to ask whether they exclude each other or whether they can be united in a reasonable faith. If the latter is possible, how are the elements of rationality and of faith related to each other? Obviously, if the meaning of faith is misunderstood in the ways we have indicated before, faith and reason exclude each other. If, however, faith is understood as the state of being ultimately concerned, no conflict need exist.

But this answer is insufficient, because man's spiritual life is a unity and does not admit elements alongside each other. All spiritual elements of man, in spite of their distinct character, are within each other. This is true also of faith and reason. Therefore, it is not enough to assert that the state of being ultimately concerned is in no conflict with the rational structure of the human mind. One also must show their actual relationship, namely, the way in which they lie within each other. In which sense, one must ask first, is the word "reason" used when confronted with faith? Is it meant, as is often the case today, in the sense of scientific method, logical strictness and technical calculation? Or is it used, as in most periods of Western culture, in the sense of the source of meaning, of structure, of norms and principles? In the first case, reason gives the tools for recognizing and controlling reality, and faith gives the direction in which this control may be exercised. One could call this kind of reason technical reason, providing for means but not for ends. Reason in this sense concerns the daily life of everybody and is the power which determines the technical civilization of our time. In the second case, reason is identical with the humanity of man in contrast to all other beings. It is the basis of language, of freedom, of creativity. It is involved in the search for knowledge, the experience of art, the actualization of moral commands; it makes a centered personal life and a participation in community possible. If faith were the opposite of reason, it would tend to dehumanize man. This consequence has been drawn, theoretically and practically, in religious and political authoritarian systems. A faith which destroys reason destroys itself and the humanity of man. For only a being who has the structure of reason is able to be ultimately concerned, to distinguish ultimate and preliminary concerns, to understand the uncontional commands of the ethical imperative, and to be aware of the presence of the holy. All this is valid only if the second meaning of reason is presupposed: reason as the meaningful structure of mind and reality; and not the first meaning: reason as a technical tool.

Reason is the precondition of faith; faith is the act in which reason

reaches ecstatically beyond itself. This is the opposite side of their being within each other. Man's reason is finite; it moves within finite relations when dealing with the universe and with man himself. All cultural activities in which man perceives his world and those in which he shapes his world have this character of finitude. Therefore, they are not matters of infinite concern. But reason is not bound to its own finitude. It is aware of it and, in so doing, rises above it. Man experiences a belonging to the infinite which, however, is neither a part of himself nor something in his power. It must grasp him, and if it does, it is a matter of infinite concern. Man is finite, man's reason lives in preliminary concerns; but man is also aware of his potential infinity, and this awareness appears as his ultimate concern, as faith. If reason is grasped by an ultimate concern, it is driven beyond itself; but it does not cease to be reason, finite reason. The ecstatic experience of an ultimate concern does not destroy the structure of reason. Ecstasy is fulfilled, not denied, rationality. Reason can be fulfilled only if it is driven beyond the limits of its finitude, and experiences the presence of the ultimate, the holy. Without such an experience reason exhausts itself and its finite contents. Finally, it becomes filled with irrational or demonic contents and is destroyed by them. The road leads from reason fulfilled in faith through reason without faith to reason fulfilled with demonic-destructive faith. The second stage is only a point of transition, since there is no vacuum in the spiritual life, as there is none in nature. Reason is the presupposition of faith, and faith is the fulfillment of reason. Faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy. There is no conflict between the nature of faith and the nature of reason; they are within each other.

On this point theology will ask several questions. It will ask whether the nature of faith is not distorted under the conditions of human existence, for example, if demonic-destructive forces get hold of it—as indicated before. And theology will ask whether the nature of reason is not distorted with man's estrangement from himself. Finally, it will ask whether the unity of faith and reason and the true nature of both of them must not be re-established by what religion calls "revelation." And —theology will continue—if this is the case, is reason in its distorted stage not obliged to subject itself to revelation and is not this subjection to the contents of revelation the true sense of the term "faith"? The answer to these questions, asked by theology, is the matter of a whole theology itself. It cannot be given in the present book except in a few basic statements.

First, it must be acknowledged that man is in a state of estrangement from his true nature. Thus the use of his reason and the character of his faith are not what they essentially are and, therefore, ought to be. This leads to actual conflicts between a distorted use of reason and an

idolatrous faith. The solution we gave with respect to the true nature of faith and the true nature of reason cannot be applied without this fundamental qualification to the actual life of faith and reason under the conditions of human existence.

The consequence of this qualification is that the estrangement of faith and of reason in themselves and in their mutual relationship must be overcome and their true nature and relation must be established within actual life. The experience in which this happens is a revelatory experience. The term "revelation" has been misused so much that it is difficult to use it at all, even more so than the term "reason." Revelation is popularly understood as a divine information about divine matters, given to prophets and apostles and dictated by the divine Spirit to the writers of the Bible, or the Koran, or other sacred books. Acceptance of such divine informations, however absurd and irrational they may be, is then called faith. Every word of the present discussion contradicts this distortion of the meaning of revelation. Revelation is first of all the experience in which an ultimate concern grasps the human mind and creates a community in which this concern expresses itself in symbols of action, imagination and thought. Wherever such a revelatory experience occurs, both faith and reason are renewed. Their internal and mutual conflicts are conquered, and estrangement is replaced by reconciliation. This is what revelation means, or should mean. It is an event in which the ultimate becomes manifest in an ultimate concern, shaking and transforming the given situation in religion and culture. In such an experience no conflict between faith and reason is possible; for it is man's total structure as a rational being which is grasped and changed by the revelatory manifestation of an ultimate concern. But revelation is revelation to man in his state of corrupted faith and corrupted rationality. And the corruption, although broken in its final power, is conquered but not removed. It enters the new revelatory experience as it had entered the old ones. It makes faith idolatrous, confusing the bearer and the manifestations of the ultimate with the ultimate itself. It deprives reason of its ecstatic power, of its tendency to transcend itself in the direction of the ultimate. In consequence of this dual distortion, it distorts the relation of faith and reason, reducing faith to a preliminary concern which interferes with the preliminary concerns of reason, and elevates reason to ultimacy in spite of its essential finitude. Out of this double corruption there arise new conflicts between faith and reason and with them the quest for a new and superior revelation. The history of faith is a permanent fight with the corruption of faith, and the conflict with reason is one of its most conspicuous symptoms. The decisive battles in this fight are the great revelatory events, and the victorious battle would be a final revelation in which the distortion of faith and reason is definitely

overcome. Christianity claims to be based on this revelation. Its claim is exposed to the continuous pragmatic test of history.

2. *The Truth of Faith and Scientific Truth*

There is no conflict between faith in its true nature and reason in its true nature. This includes the assertion that there is no essential conflict between faith and the cognitive function of reason. Cognition in all its forms was always considered as that function of man's reason which comes most easily into conflict with faith. This was especially so when faith was defined as a lower form of knowledge and was accepted because the divine authority guaranteed its truth. We have rejected this distortion of the meaning of faith, and in doing so have removed one of the most frequent causes for the conflicts between faith and knowledge. But we must show beyond this the concrete relation of faith to the several forms of cognitive reason: the scientific, the historical and the philosophical. The truth of faith is different from the meaning of truth in each of these ways of knowledge. Nevertheless, it is truth they all try to reach truth in the sense of the "really real" received adequately by the cognitive function of the human mind. Error takes place if man's cognitive endeavor misses the really real and takes that which is only seemingly real for real; or if it hits the really real but expresses it in a distorted way. Often it is difficult to say whether the real is missed or whether its expression is inadequate, because the two forms of error are interdependent. In any case, where there is the attempt to know, there is truth or error or one of the many degrees of transition between truth and error. In faith man's cognitive function is at work. Therefore, we must ask what the meaning of truth in faith is, what its criteria are, and how it is related to other forms of truth with other kinds of criteria.

Science tries to describe and to explain the structures and relations in the universe, in so far as they can be tested by experiment and calculated in quantitative terms. The truth of a scientific statement is the adequacy of the description of the structural laws which determine reality, and it is the verification of this description by experimental repetitions. Every scientific truth is preliminary and subject to changes both in grasping reality and in expressing it adequately. This element of uncertainty does not diminish the truth value of a tested and verified scientific assertion. It only prevents scientific dogmatism and absolutism.

Therefore, it is a very poor method of defending the truth of faith against the truth of science, if theologians point to the preliminary character of every scientific statement in order to provide a place of retreat for the truth of faith. If tomorrow scientific progress reduced the sphere of uncertainty, faith would have to continue its retreat—an undignified

and unnecessary procedure, for scientific truth and the truth of faith do not belong to the same dimension of meaning. Science has no right and no power to interfere with faith and faith has no power to interfere with science. One dimension of meaning is not able to interfere with another dimension.

If this is understood, the previous conflicts between faith and science appear in a quite different light. The conflict was actually not between faith and science but between a faith and a science each of which was not aware of its own valid dimension. When the representatives of faith impeded the beginning of modern astronomy they were not aware that the Christian symbols, although using the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic astronomy, were not tied up with this astronomy. Only if the symbols of "God in heaven" and "man on earth" and "demons below the earth" are taken as descriptions of places, populated by divine or demonic beings can modern astronomy conflict with the Christian faith. On the other hand, if representatives of modern physics reduce the whole of reality to the mechanical movement of the smallest particles of matter, denying the really real quality of life and mind, they express a faith, objectively as well as subjectively. Subjectively science is their ultimate concern—and they are ready to sacrifice everything, including their lives, for this ultimate. Objectively, they create a monstrous symbol of this concern, namely, a universe in which everything, including their own scientific passion, is swallowed by a meaningless mechanism. In opposing this symbol of faith Christian faith is right.

Science can conflict only with science, and faith only with faith; science which remains science cannot conflict with faith which remains faith. This is true also of other spheres of scientific research, such as biology and psychology. The famous struggle between the theory of evolution and the theology of some Christian groups was not a struggle between science and faith, but between a science whose faith deprived man of his humanity and a faith whose expression was distorted by Biblical literalism. It is obvious that a theology which interprets the Biblical story of creation as a scientific description of an event which happened once upon a time interferes with the methodologically controlled scientific work; and that a theory of evolution which interprets man's descendance from older forms of life in a way that removes the infinite, qualitative difference between man and animal is faith and not science.

The same consideration must be given to present and future conflicts between faith and contemporary psychology. Modern psychology is afraid of the concept of soul because it seems to establish a reality which is unapproachable by scientific methods and may interfere with their results. This fear is not unfounded; psychology should not accept any

concept which is not produced by its own scientific work. Its function is to describe man's processes as adequately as possible, and to be open to replacement of these descriptions at any time. This is true of the modern concepts of ego, superego, self, personality, unconsciousness, mind, as well as of the traditional concepts of soul, spirit, will, etc. Methodological psychology is subject to scientific verification, as is every other scientific endeavor. All its concepts and definitions, even those most validated, are preliminary.

When faith speaks of the ultimate dimension in which man lives, and in which he can win or lose his soul, or of the ultimate meaning of his existence, it is not interfering at all with the scientific rejection of the concept of the soul. A psychology without soul cannot deny this nor can a psychology with soul confirm it. The truth of man's eternal meaning lies in a dimension other than the truth of adequate psychological concepts. Contemporary analytic or depth psychology has in many instances conflicted with pre-theological and theological expressions of faith. It is, however, not difficult in the statements of depth psychology to distinguish the more or less verified observations and hypotheses from assertions about man's nature and destiny which are clearly expressions of faith. The naturalistic elements which Freud carried from the nineteenth into the twentieth century, his basic puritanism with respect to love, his pessimism about culture, and his reduction of religion to ideological projection are all expressions of faith and not the result of scientific analysis. There is no reason to deny to a scholar who deals with man and his predicament the right to introduce elements of faith. But if he attacks other forms of faith in the name of scientific psychology, as Freud and many of his followers do, he is confusing dimensions. In this case those who represent another kind of faith are justified in resisting these attacks. It is not always easy to distinguish the element of faith from the element of scientific hypothesis in a psychological assertion, but it is possible and often necessary.

The distinction between the truth of faith and the truth of science leads to a warning, directed to theologians, not to use recent scientific discoveries to confirm the truth of faith. Microphysics have undercut some scientific hypotheses concerning the calculability of the universe. The theory of quantum and the principle of indeterminacy have had this effect. Immediately religious writers use these insights for the confirmation of their own ideas of human freedom, divine creativity, and miracles. But there is no justification for such a procedure at all, neither from the point of view of physics nor from the point of view of religion. The physical theories referred to have no direct relation to the infinitely complex phenomenon of human freedom, and the emission of power in quantums has no direct relation to the meaning of miracles. Theology,

in using physical theories in this way, confuses the dimension of science with the dimension of faith. The truth of faith cannot be confirmed by latest physical or biological or psychological discoveries—as it cannot be denied by them.

3. *The Truth of Faith and Historical Truth*

Historical truth has a character quite different from that of scientific truth. History reports unique events, not repetitious processes which can be tested again and again. Historical events are not subject to experiment. The only analogy in history to a physical experiment is the comparison of documents. If documents of an independent origin agree, a historical assertion is verified within its own limits. But history does not only tell a series of facts. It also tries to understand these facts in their origins, their relations, their meaning. History describes, explains, and understands. And understanding presupposes participation. This is the difference between historical and scientific truth. In historical truth the interpreting subject is involved; in scientific truth it is detached. Since the truth of faith means total involvement, historical truth has often been compared with the truth of faith. A complete dependence of the historical truth on the truth of faith has been derived from such an identification. In this way it has been asserted that faith can guarantee the truth of a questionable historical statement. But he who makes such assertions forgets that in a genuine historical work detached and controlled observation is as much used as in the observation of physical or biological processes. Historical truth is first of all factual truth; in this it is distinguished from the poetic truth of epics or from the mythical truth of legend. This difference is decisive for the relation of the truth of faith to the truth of history. Faith cannot guarantee factual truth. But faith can and must interpret the meaning of facts from the point of view of man's ultimate concern. In doing so it transfers historical truth into the dimension of the truth of faith.

This problem has come into the foreground of much popular and theological thought since historical research has discovered the literary character of the Biblical writings. It has shown that in their narrative parts the Old and the New Testament combine historical, legendary and mythological elements and that in many cases it is impossible to separate these elements from each other with any degree of probability. Historical research has made it obvious that there is no way to get at the historical events which have produced the Biblical picture of Jesus who is called the Christ with more than a degree of probability. Similar research in the historical character of the holy writings and the legendary traditions of non-Christian religions has discovered the same situation.

The truth of faith cannot be made dependent on the historical truth of the stories and legends in which faith has expressed itself. It is a disastrous distortion of the meaning of faith to identify it with the belief in the historical validity of the Biblical stories. This, however, happens on high as well as on low levels of sophistication. People say that others or they themselves are without Christian faith, because they do not believe that the New Testament miracle stories are reliably documented. Certainly they are not, and the search for the degree of probability or improbability of a Biblical story has to be made with all the tools of a solid philological and historical method. It is not a matter of faith to decide if the presently used edition of the Moslemic Koran is identical with the original text, although this is the fervent belief of most of the adherents of Mohammed. It is not a matter of faith to decide that large parts of the Pentateuch are priestly wisdom of the period after the Babylonic exile, or that the Book of Genesis contains more myths and sacred legend than actual history. It is not a matter of faith to decide whether or not the expectation of the final catastrophe of the universe as envisaged in the late books of the Old and in the New Testament originated in the Persian religion. It is not a matter of faith to decide how much legendary, mythological and historical material is amalgamated in the stories about the birth and the resurrection of the Christ. It is not a matter of faith to decide which version of the reports about the early days of the Church has the greatest probability. All these questions must be decided, in terms of more or less probability, by historical research. They are questions of historical truth, not of the truth of faith. Faith can say that something of ultimate concern has happened in history because the question of the ultimate in being and meaning is involved. Faith can say that the Old Testament law which is given as the law of Moses has unconditional validity for those who are grasped by it, no matter how much or how little can be traced to a historical figure of that name. Faith can say that the reality which is manifest in the New Testament picture of Jesus as the Christ has saving power for those who are grasped by it, no matter how much or how little can be traced to the historical figure who is called Jesus of Nazareth. Faith can ascertain its own foundation, the Mosaic law, or Jesus as the Christ, Mohammed the prophet, or Buddha the illuminated. But faith cannot ascertain the historical conditions which made it possible for these men to become matters of ultimate concern for large sections of humanity. Faith includes certitude about its own foundation—for example, an event in history which has transformed history—for the faithful. But faith does not include historical knowledge about the way in which this event took place. Therefore, faith cannot be shaken by historical research even if its results are critical of the traditions in which the event is reported.

This independence of historical truth is one of the most important consequences of the understanding of faith as the state of ultimate concern. It liberates the faithful from a burden they cannot carry after the demands of scholarly honesty have shaped their conscience. If such honesty were in a necessary conflict with what has been called the "obedience of faith," God would be seen as split in himself, as having demonic traits; and the concern about it would not be ultimate concern, but the conflict of two limited concerns. Such faith, in the last analysis, is idolatrous.

4. The Truth of Faith and Philosophical Truth

Neither scientific nor historical truth can affirm or negate the truth of faith. The truth of faith can neither affirm nor negate scientific or historical truth. Then the question arises whether philosophical truth has the same relation to the truth of faith or whether the relation is more complex. This, indeed, is the case. What is more, the complexity of the relation between philosophical truth and the truth of faith makes the relation of scientific and historical truth more complex than it appeared in the preceding analysis. This is the reason for the innumerable discussions about the relationship of faith and philosophy and for the popular opinion that philosophy is the enemy and destroyer of faith. Even theologians who have used a philosophical concept in order to express the faith of a religious community have been accused of betraying the faith.

The difficulty of every discussion concerning philosophy as such is the fact that every definition of philosophy is an expression of the point of view of the philosopher who gives the definition. Nevertheless, there is a kind of prephilosophical agreement about the meaning of philosophy, and the only thing one can do in a discussion like the present one is to use this prephilosophical notion of what philosophy is. In this sense philosophy is the attempt to answer the most general questions about the nature of reality and human existence. Most general are those questions which do not ask about the nature of a specific sphere of reality (as the physical or the historical realms) but about the nature of reality, which is effective in all realms. Philosophy tries to find the universal categories in which being is experienced.

If such a notion of philosophy is presupposed, the relation of philosophical truth to the truth of faith can be determined. Philosophical truth is truth about the structure of being; the truth of faith is truth about one's ultimate concern. Up to this point the relation seems to be very similar to that between the truth of faith and scientific truth. But the difference is that there is a point of identity between the ultimate

of the philosophical question and the ultimate of the religious concern. In both cases ultimate reality is sought and expressed—conceptually in philosophy, symbolically in religion. Philosophical truth consists in true concepts concerning the ultimate; the truth of faith consists in true symbols concerning the ultimate. The relation between these two is the problem with which we have to deal.

The question will certainly be raised: Why does philosophy use concepts and why does faith use symbols if both try to express the same ultimate? The answer, of course, is that the relation to the ultimate is not the same in each case. The philosophical relation is in principle a detached description of the basic structure in which the ultimate manifests itself. The relation of faith is in principle an involved expression of concern about the meaning of the ultimate for the faithful. The difference is obvious and fundamental. But it is, as the phrase "in principle" indicates, a difference which is not maintained in the actual life of philosophy and of faith. It cannot be maintained, because the philosopher is a human being with an ultimate concern, hidden or open. And the faithful one is a human being with the power of thought and the need for conceptual understanding. This is not only a biographical fact. It has consequences for the life of philosophy in the philosopher and for the life of faith in the faithful.

An analysis of philosophical systems, essays or fragments of all kinds shows that the direction in which the philosopher asks the question and the preference he gives to special types of answers is determined by cognitive consideration and by a state of ultimate concern. The historically most significant philosophies show not only the greatest power of thought but the most passionate concern about the meaning of the ultimate whose manifestations they describe. One needs only to be reminded of the Indian and Greek philosophers, almost without exception, and the modern philosophers from Leibniz and Spinoza to Kant and Hegel. If it seems that the positivistic line of philosophers from Locke and Hume to present-day logical positivism is an exception to this rule, one must consider that the task to which these philosophers restricted themselves were special problems of the doctrine of knowledge and, in our time especially, analyses of the linguistic tools of scientific knowledge. This certainly is a justified and very important endeavor, but is not philosophy in the traditional sense.

Philosophy, in its genuine meaning, is carried on by people in whom the passion of an ultimate concern is united with a clear and detached observation of the way ultimate reality manifests itself in the processes of the universe. It is this element of ultimate concern behind philosophical ideas which supplies the truth of faith in them. Their vision of the universe and of man's predicament within it unites faith and con-

ceptual work. Philosophy is not only the mother's womb out of which science and history have come, it is also an ever-present element in actual scientific and historical work. The frame of reference within which the great physicists have seen and are seeing the universe of their inquiries is philosophical, even if their actual inquiries verify it. In no case is it a result of their discoveries. It is always a vision of the totality of being which consciously or unconsciously determines the frame of their thought. Because this is so one is justified in saying that even in the scientific view of reality an element of faith is effective. Scientists rightly try to prevent these elements of faith and philosophical truth from interfering with their actual research. This is possible to a great extent; but even the most protected experiment is not absolutely "pure" —pure in the sense of the exclusion of interfering factors such as the observer, and as the interest which determines the kind of question asked of nature in an experiment. What we said about the philosopher must also be said about the scientist. Even in his scientific work he is a human being, grasped by an ultimate concern, and he asks the question of the universe as such, the philosophical question.

In the same way the historian is consciously or unconsciously a philosopher. It is quite obvious that every task of the historian beyond the finding of facts is dependent on evaluations of historical factors, especially the nature of man, his freedom, his determination, his development out of nature, etc. It is less obvious but also true that even in the act of finding historical facts philosophical presuppositions are involved. This is especially true in deciding, out of the infinite number of happenings in every infinitely small moment of time, which facts shall be called historically relevant facts. The historian is further forced to give his evaluation of sources and their reliability, a task which is not independent of his interpretation of human nature. Finally, in the moment in which a historical work gives implicit or explicit assertions about the meaning of historical events for human existence, the philosophical presuppositions of history are evident. Where there is philosophy there is expression of an ultimate concern; there is an element of faith, however hidden it may be by the passion of the historian for pure facts.

All these considerations show that, in spite of their essential difference, there is an actual union of philosophical truth and the truth of faith in every philosophy and that this union is significant for the work of the scientist and the historian. This union has been called "philosophical faith."[1] The term is misleading, because it seems to confuse the two elements, philosophical truth and the truth of faith. Further, the term seems to indicate that there is *one* philosophical faith, a "philosophia

[1] In the book of this name by Jaspers.

perennis," as it has been termed. But only the philosophical question is perennial, not the answers. There is a continuous process of interpretation of philosophical elements and elements of faith, not *one* philosophical faith.

There is truth of faith in philosophical truth. And there is philosophical truth in the truth of faith. In order to see the latter point we must confront the conceptual expression of philosophical truth with the symbolical expression of the truth of faith. Now, one can say that most philosophical concepts have mythological ancestors and that most mythological symbols have conceptual elements which can and must be developed as soon as the philosophical consciousness has appeared. In the idea of God the concepts of being, life, spirit, unity and diversity are implied. In the symbol of the creation concepts of finitude, anxiety, freedom and time are implied. The symbol of the "fall of Adam" implies a concept of man's essential nature, of his conflict with himself, of his estrangement from himself. Only because every religious symbol has conceptual potentialities is "theo-logy" possible. There is a philosophy implied in every symbol of faith. But faith does not determine the movement of the philosophical thought, just as philosophy does not determine the character of one's ultimate concern. Symbols of faith can open the eyes of the philosopher to qualities of the universe which otherwise would not have been recognized by him. But faith does not command a definite philosophy, although churches and theological movements have claimed and used Platonic, Aristotelian, Kantian or Humean philosophies. The philosophical implications of the symbols of faith can be developed in many ways, but the truth of faith and the truth of philosophy have no authority over each other.

5. *The Truth of Faith and Its Criteria*

In what sense, then, can one speak of the truth of faith if it cannot be judged by any other kind of truth, whether scientific, historical or philosophical? The answer follows from the nature of faith as the state of being ultimately concerned. It has, as the concept of concern itself, two sides, a subjective and an objective side. The truth of faith must be considered from both sides. From the subjective side one must say that faith is true if it adequately expresses an ultimate concern. From the objective side one must say that faith is true if its content is the really ultimate. The first answer acknowledges the truth in all genuine symbols and types of faith. It justifies the history of religion and makes it understandable as a history of man's ultimate concern, of his response to the manifestation of the holy in many places in many ways. The second answer points to a criterion of ultimacy by which the history of religion is judged, not in terms of rejection but in terms of a yes and no.

Faith has truth in so far as it adequately expresses an ultimate concern. "Adequacy" of expression means the power of expressing an ultimate concern in such a way that it creates reply, action, communication. Symbols which are able to do this are alive. But the life of symbols is limited. The relation of man to the ultimate undergoes changes. Contents of ultimate concern vanish or are replaced by others. A divine figure ceases to create reply, it ceases to be a common symbol and loses its power to move for action. Symbols which for a certain period, or in a certain place, expressed truth of faith for a certain group now only remind of the faith of the past. They have lost their truth, and it is an open question whether dead symbols can be revived. Probably not for those to whom they have died! If we look from this point of view at the history of faith, including our own period, the criterion of the truth of faith is whether or not it is alive. This, certainly, is not an exact criterion in any scientific sense, but it is a pragmatic one that can be applied rather easily to the past with its stream of obviously dead symbols. It cannot be applied so easily to the present because one never can say a symbol is definitely dead if it is still accepted. It may be dormant but capable of being reawakened.

The other criterion of the truth of a symbol of faith is that it expresses the ultimate which is really ultimate. In other words, that it is not idolatrous. In the light of this criterion the history of faith as a whole stands under judgment. The weakness of all faith is the ease with which it becomes idolatrous. The human mind, Calvin has said, is a continuously working factory of idols. This is true of all types of faith, and even if Protestant Christianity is considered as the point in which the different types converge, it is open to idolatrous distortions. It must also apply against itself the criterion which it uses against other forms of faith. Every type of faith has the tendency to elevate its concrete symbols to absolute validity. The criterion of the truth of faith, therefore, is that it implies an element of self-negation. That symbol is most adequate which expresses not only the ultimate but also its own lack of ultimacy. Christianity expresses itself in such a symbol in contrast to all other religions, namely, in the Cross of the Christ. Jesus could not have been the Christ without sacrificing himself as Jesus to himself as the Christ. Any acceptance of Jesus as the Christ which is not the acceptance of Jesus the crucified is a form of idolatry. The ultimate concern of the Christian is not Jesus, but the Christ Jesus who is manifest as the crucified. The event which has created this symbol has given the criterion by which the truth of Christianity, as well as of any other religion, must be judged. The only infallible truth of faith, the one in which the ultimate itself is unconditionally manifest, is that any truth of faith stands under a yes-or-no judgment.

Driven by this criterion, Protestantism has criticized the Roman

Church. Doctrinal formulations did not divide the churches in the Reformation period; it was the rediscovery of the principle that no church has the right to put itself in the place of the ultimate. Its truth is judged by the ultimate. In the same way, Biblical research in Protestantism has shown the many levels of Biblical literature and the impossibility of considering the Bible as containing the infallible truth of faith. The same criterion is valid with respect to the whole history of religion and culture. The criterion contains a Yes—it does not reject any truth of faith in whatever form it may appear in the history of faith—and it contains a No—it does not accept any truth of faith as ultimate except the one that no man possesses it. The fact that this criterion is identical with the Protestant principle and has become reality in the Cross of the Christ constitutes the superiority of Protestant Christianity.

These definitions and distinctions may appear rather cool in print, unlike the passion of a Kierkegaard, or even the depth of feeling one senses in Heidegger's efforts to clarify what is beyond normal vocabulary, but overwhelmingly real. The impression of coolness is an injustice, however, to Tillich, who has ministered to awareness of truth in his time also in another way that greatly warms and fortifies his writing. This is his ability to perceive and express "ultimate concern" in forms not dressed up to be visibly religious or even conscious of what they are.

He cites, for instance, Elsa Brandström, a Swedish friend (known elsewhere as the "Angel of Siberia" for her work among prisoners of war during World War I). Her life was spent "in abiding love, although she rarely, if ever, used the name of God. . . . Wherever she appeared despair was conquered and sorrow healed." This daughter of the last Swedish ambassador to the Tsar adopted and brought up in Germany great numbers of German war orphans—herself making beds daily in their dormitories. When her family fortune was gone, she raised money for them by lecture tours. A generation later with her German husband, Prof. Robert Ulich, she embarked on a whole new work in America for Hitler's victims. Tall, full of light and life, she was not at all pious or sentimental. Tillich vividly describes her personal approach and comments, "We never had a theological conversation. It was unnecessary. She made God transparent in every moment."[7]

Thus, though much interested in symbols, Tillich had a rare skill in

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[7] *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), chapter entitled "The Power of Love," pp. 27 f. Some details from a family friend of the late Mrs. Ulich.

stripping off from all kinds of situations the whole business of an accepted façade or label. (In the above sketch, for instance, he mentions none of the more striking details—only the woman herself.) With beguiling simplicity he gets almost at once to the emptiness or fullness of heart under the appearance. For this a generation of students, colleagues, and readers will remember him with uncommon affection. He may be said to have broken into the picture of modern belief with an unerring finger on reality—or depth—in human life, just at the time when the crumbling of tradition was bewildering a new generation and it hardly knew where to look for the real focus of Christian thought.

Tillich is a thinker who stands between Schleiermacher's awareness of the presence of the "infinite" and Kierkegaard's "alienation of existence." He has the vision of an Edwards coupled with the existential realism of a Heidegger. His writing has great power, for it picks up many of the tendencies of our times. But it remains to be seen whether his language does not depart too radically from the traditional language of faith and the history through which faith has been given. We shall see below how forcefully Karl Barth raises this question.

7. Karl Barth

1886-

(For biographical notes and brief bibliography, see p. 139.)

"Faith is simply following, following its object."

"In faith truth is not a matter of this or that truth or this or that redemption, but of the person who is Himself truth and redemption."

Barth shows important similarities to Heidegger's style of thought. He puts into theological language, however, what Heidegger presents in philosophical categories. Barth speaks from the point of view of biblical revelation. He begins not with human consciousness but with being; not being in general but the concrete being of Jesus Christ. As with Edwards, the object of faith receives more emphasis than the faith of the subject. For Barth the object is related to the subject in Christological terms: that is, of God's own humanity. Compared with Descartes' classic formula and starting point, the movement here is from outer to inner, from object to subject—from the being of Christ and his community to the individual Christian.

Barth compares Christ, the object of faith, to a circle "enclosing all men and every individual man. In the case of the Christian this circle closes with the fact that he believes. In the case of non-Christians it is still open at the point where he ought to believe but does not yet believe, or no longer believes." The closing of the circle makes it possible for the human being within it to be completely open, on every side, in every aspect of life, to Christ. But the reality of Christ, the "object," is in no way changed or conditioned by the response of faith or lack of response. The all-encompassing fact of Jesus Christ is given, and remains. Neither faith nor unfaith can either prove or impoverish the reality of God's redemptive activity in the Word.

The faith of the subject is actually derived from the being of the object. Where the response of faith, of openness to Christ on every side, completes the all-encompassing circle, there man's own being is wholly opened in faith rather than closed in unbelief. There is "profound spontaneity" and a "native freedom." This is because the subject allows himself to be shaped in terms of the reality of the "one true object." In his believing, open relation to the object of his "necessary" and "central" concern, the subject finds his true center outside himself. This is what we earlier described in the term "being as a history" (*Geschichte*) rather than as a "state" or condition (*Zustand*). It is freedom in openness, turned outward: being in otherness.

We have seen the development of the Cartesian view that starts with the thinking "I," followed by Heidegger, who speaks of truth of Being itself in its unconcealedness. Barth clearly inclines to the latter kind of outlook. In this he is somewhat like Schleiermacher, for whom God-consciousness cuts beneath and beyond the antithesis of freedom and dependence. Barth sees the truth of Jesus Christ as to be apprehended beyond the polarity of control and receptivity that prevails in our knowledge of the world. In faith, the subject accepts the "control" of the object of faith. Where Schleiermacher speaks of absolute dependence as basic in the life of faith, Barth sees a kind of absolute receptivity in the relation of faith to its object.

Yet man is not a mere automaton. He does not cease to be human, exercising his own powers, in spite of receptivity to the object and control by it. We must not forget that Barth's "being as a history" is never intended to displace "being as a state," with all the genuine human capacities associated with a free agent.[1] Schleiermacher emphasized the interrelation between "God-consciousness" and "sensible self-consciousness." For him the truth of faith had no separate existence as an idea but occurred, so to speak, in the *reciprocity* between freedom and dependence that marks our daily experience. So, too, with Barth. The truth of Christ, of which we are aware when we are controlled by Christ, finds meaning precisely in the midst of our general experience with its mixture of receptivity and control.

To accept the truth of Christ is not simply to respond to one object among others. In that unconscious misapprehension the relation of faith can easily be wrenched. It can become the ordinary give-and-take of self-originated activity and control. Yet the object of faith cannot be separated from the details of concrete experience, either. In the midst of all his own creaturely powers, the believing subject accepts the Lordship of Christ: that is, acknowledges the right of the object to rule.

Schleiermacher understands absolute dependence as the "consciousness that the whole of our spontaneous activity comes from a source outside of us." Barth looks upon "absolute receptivity" as the awareness, in faith, that true freedom mirrors the freedom of Christ. By allowing himself to be held captive by the object whose very being is openness, the subject knows the truth that sets him free.

The object of faith, Jesus Christ, is also the *power* of faith. Thus faith in its openness is at once an activity of the subject and a gift of the object, an activity of the person and a gift of God. Complete openness of the individual is precisely what closes the circuit of the all-encompassing circle of Christ in perfect relationship. A person does not come

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[1] See above, pp. 141–142.

to faith merely by an effort of will. Nor is it simply one choice among several, as one might choose, say, belief or unbelief, or some other faith. In the divine Yes of God's decision to be man's covenant partner in Jesus Christ, he has at the same time pronounced a No upon the possibility of unbelief as an alternative. It is reduced to an "ontological impossibility."[2] How then are we to take its persistence in the world? The only possible status of unbelief, the only true way of seeing it, according to Barth, is in the light of Christ's circle waiting to be closed by the individual's acceptance of God's decision for man.

Faith has its orientation and basis in Christ as its object, but Barth insists that the Christian subject is communal before it is individual. Here, too, his post-Cartesian temper is evident. There is no *subject* of faith apart from its community. There is no Christian "I and Thou and He" outside the "twofold, Christ-centered circle of the We and You and They of the race and the community."

But if, for Barth, faith occurs only within the "Body of Christ," we must remember that for him there is no Church apart from the world. If the circle of reality in Christ has been "closed" by completing faith, there precisely—in his relationship within the circle—man's being is "open" to a center outside himself. In this openness is his freedom for God and his neighbor. Here is his freedom in the Church and for the world. Here is his freedom for Christ and all creation, as the object of Christ's concern.

In the following selection Barth begins his discussion of faith by asking what makes a Christian. He pauses to dispose (at some length of small print) of the idea that doctrine is the automatic mark of Christians. Here he distinguishes between the Christian faith (the true and essential thing whose elements he mentions) and the development of Christian religion, which may be thought of historically, psychologically, and so forth as faith cannot be. Religion is not faith, although true faith may exist somewhere within it. The writer also disposes in passing of the self-centered tendencies of the so-called Christian in modern times.

Barth then considers the relation of faith to its object—the Christian's real relation to the circle of Christ already described. The first thing he says about faith is that "it consists in the orientation of man on Jesus Christ." With his orientation to Christ the subject himself ceases to be in control. In fact, he only remains in control when he is *not* wholly oriented on Christ and is thus "eccentric." For when he is wholly open

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[2] This admittedly is a very specialized kind of faith statement. But Barth's point is clear. Unbelief, as one form of sin, lacks any real basis for being, since Jesus Christ defines the very nature of reality. Whatever continues to oppose Christ, as in the act of man's refusal to believe, has only a relative and passing right to exist when measured by the all-encompassing "object" of faith.

to Christ and at one with the circle of Christ around him, he finds his true center outside himself and must cling to Him to whom he belongs. All human striving becomes absorbed in this one orientation.

"Faith is the human activity which is present and future, which is there, in the presence of the living Jesus Christ. . . ." Another way of explaining the relationship, Barth continues, is the figure of the mirror in Second Corinthians. "We all with open face mirror the glory of the Lord." "This reflecting of the glory of the Lord is made possible by the uncovering of the human face, by the seeing which is the result of this uncovering, by the fact that in this seeing man becomes the mirror of that which faces him . . . and, above all, by the 'glory of the Lord' itself." In this man is nothing. He simply finds himself in the relation and "sees and reaches out and grows beyond himself." Thus he is "for the first time faithful to himself." This involves renunciation, but that is his true and proper work.

The second thing about faith is that it also *comes from Christ*. This is not a contradiction, for it is the work of Christ to make us free to believe in him. Here Barth describes the fallen state of man and how his alienation makes a gulf between himself and faith. No one surmounts this gulf except by the grace of God. "A self-fabricated faith is the climax of unbelief" and of pride. Man is most terribly fooled if he imagines he can achieve faith by himself. The genuine freedom for the response of faith is contrary to man's pride in personal reason and in other respects. With only his own resources, as between faith and sin "faith will always come off second best." The picture of man able, like some Hercules at the crossroads, to choose between faith and sin is pure illusion.

The fact is, faith makes no bridges. It fills in the gulf with solid land, and there is no longer any question of a bridge. This is why Barth speaks of the "impossibility" of unbelief. One does not face, on the one hand faith and on the other unbelief, as two possibilities. One is not left to calculate whether the gulf can be bridged. It is filled in, and the "possibility" of unbelief ceases to exist.

There remains the "only necessity" of faith: the act of faith. This is a spontaneous and joyful certainty. But again the writer notes that this act is not a potential of man's own nature. The power for it does not even lie in faith itself, but in the object of faith "in whom it took place, in whom it has taken place for every man. . . ." Here Barth eloquently sums up the salvation of Christ. The alternative of unbelief is swept away, the root of sin pulled out, and the root of faith, of obedience, planted. Unbelief becomes an impossibility in relation to this reality, and belief a necessity for all men.

The awakening power of the Holy Spirit confronts a man with this impossibility and this necessity. It so illumines him that he speaks in

freedom the Yes of his act of faith. He has no other choice. The divine decision is not made in him; it is only repeated. The act of faith takes place by a free choice *beside which there is no other choice.* Thus he is in the most complete sense genuinely free. There is no need even to consider anything else.

Human participation in this act of faith is something a man can only *receive.* He can continually understand it as something to be received again and to be confirmed in a new act. He is not necessarily strong when he believes. But "the One in whom he believes shows Himself to be strong over him." Faith means: to be awake "on the basis of this awakening" from the death of unbelief.

There is a third decisive, perhaps final, thing about faith. This is the formation of the Christian, his inner structure, as a result of orientation to Christ. He becomes a Christian only in the act of faith—not on the basis of any "creaturely" traits that could be enumerated. Here Barth takes occasion to explore (again in small print, at some length) the New Testament evidence of what it is to be born again, examining the original Greek wording. Moreover, man has a new relation to the world. Faith in Christ includes faith in his action for the world and all men. Christians are distinct as bearers of "a specially qualified and emphasized solidarity with all other men." They are a people, a community, whose function in life (though in humility and obedience and thankfulness) is to be a reflection of the glory of God. A Christian "would not be a Christian . . . separated from the fellowship of the saints." This means actually no limitation of his own freedom. It is simply in the nature of the Christian fulfillment that "there are no saints without the fellowship, but there is no fellowship without the saints."

Barth's major work is his *Church Dogmatics.* Our selection is from Volume IV, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation.* Here again Barth deals with his theme at such length that a system of subdivisions is required. The excerpt consists of a substantial part of a section dealing with "The Holy Spirit and Christian Faith." This in turn is part of the chapter entitled "Jesus Christ, the Lord as Servant."

(From Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* Vol. IV, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation,* Part I, G. W. Bromiley, trans. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956], pp. 740–51.)

1. FAITH AND ITS OBJECT

We must now speak of that which makes a man a Christian, of the basis of the Christian existence of the individual, and therefore of faith. It is a matter of the faith of the Christian community which, as such, is

that of its individual human members, those who are called Christians and who may perhaps be serious Christians.

In the modern period there have been massive theological structures which have begun at the very point where we now end. They started with the presupposition that, whatever may be the attitude to it, Christian faith as such is a fact and phenomenon which is generally known and which can, as such, be explained to everybody; or rather more cautiously, that a generally plausible account can be given of it because the possibility of it can be demonstrated and explained in the light of general anthropology. According to this type of structure the task of dogmatics is the description of Christian faith as such (the *fides qua creditur*) and the enumeration, exposition and explanation of its characteristic expressions (the *fides quae creditur*). And all on the further underlying presupposition that the really interesting and vital problem of the Christian is the one which is nearest to hand, that is to say, himself, his existence as a Christian, and therefore the fact and phenomenon of his faith. Dogmatics, therefore, is the "doctrine of faith."

The following comments may be made on this view. It is certainly true that at every point Church dogmatics has to bring out and describe the content of the knowledge and confession of Christian faith. To that extent it is not absolutely impossible that it should be understood and called the doctrine of faith. If it does not do this it is because its leading concept is that of the right knowledge and confession of Christian faith, and as the essence of this that of dogma—not the dogma laid down by the Church, but the dogma which is authoritative and normative for the Church. Christian faith itself and as such belongs to the content of the right knowledge and confession of Christian faith implied in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and therefore in the third article of the creed. It belongs to that of which the right knowledge and confession has to be sought in dogmatics. But for that very reason the basic presupposition of these modern structures is called in question. Christian faith is not in any sense a fact and phenomenon which is generally known and which can as such be explained to everybody. The Christian religion is a fact and phenomenon of this kind. As such it can be considered and estimated historically, psychologically, sociologically and perhaps even philosophically. But the Christian religion is not as such Christian faith. Christian faith is something concealed in the Christian religion (like the true Church in its visibility). As such it can only be believed. It can be known and confessed only in faith. For the same reason we must question the other version of the presupposition, that the possibility of it can be demonstrated and explained in the light of general anthropology. A human self-understanding which includes the possibility of faith can itself be only that of an anthropology which for its part derives from the actuality of faith, which is a specific form of that knowledge and confession, whereas the possibilities which can be demonstrated and explained in the light of anthropology may perhaps be religious, but they are not those of Christian faith. If faith itself belongs to the content of the knowledge and confession

of Christian faith, we have to note that although it knows and confesses itself it cannot in any sense think of itself as grounded in itself. As *fides qua creditur* it cannot regard itself as a primary datum (δός μοι ποῦ στῷ) [Grant unto me a place to stand] and therefore as the author of its so-called "expressions" the *fides quae creditur.* It can think of itself only as a last thing which follows, and can only follow, a fourth, a third, a second—and, above all, and supremely a first, so that it needs a whole series of bases and finally, or first of all, its new basis in which all the intermediate bases are themselves grounded. Christian faith knows and confesses that it is this last thing. In no case can its knowledge and confession begin with itself. It knows and confesses first its one basis which includes all the others. It knows and confesses itself only as referred wholly and utterly to this first thing, only as the consequences of it. That is why in this first part of the doctrine of reconciliation we had to speak first of all (implying all that follows and therefore this last thing) of Jesus Christ Himself, the Lord who became a servant, the Judge who was Himself judged for us. Then, of course, we had to speak at once of man, but of man in his antagonism to Jesus Christ—the man of sin. Then in the doctrine of justification we had to expound the divine Nevertheless pronounced to man in Jesus Christ. Then at last, in the first form of ecclesiology, we had to come to the underlying form of the subjective realisation of this whole being and occurrence as fulfilled by man too. The other form of it, Christian faith, or concretely, the Christian who knows this whole being and occurrence in faith, has accompanied us as a presupposition all along our way. But it is only now that he can properly become for a short time an independent theme.

The objection against the underlying but all the more powerful presupposition of those modern doctrines of faith is in moral categories an objection against their arrogance. They rest on the fact that in the last centuries (on the broad way which leads from the older Pietism to the present-day theological existentialism inspired by Kierkegaard) the Christian has begun to take himself seriously in a way which is not at all commensurate with the seriousness of Christianity. They represent Christian truth as though its supreme glory is to rotate around the individual Christian with his puny faith, so that there is cause for gratification if they do not regard him as its lord and creator. From the bottom up we can neither approve nor make common cause with this procedure of modern doctrines of faith. We shall give to the individual Christian and his faith the attention which he demands, but it must be at this point—not at the beginning of our way, but very briefly at the end.

We will begin by considering the relationship of Christian faith to its object. Faith is a human activity which cannot be compared with any other in spontaneity and native freedom. But it is in a relationship. It is in relationship to its object, to something which confronts the believer, which is distinct from him, which cannot be exhausted in his faith, which cannot be absorbed by his believing existence, let alone only consist in

it and proceed from it and stand or fall with it. The very opposite is true, that faith stands or falls with its object. It is a subjective realisation. That is, as a human activity it consists in the subjectivisation of an objective *res* which in its existence and essence and dignity and significance and scope takes precedence of this subjectivisation and therefore of the human subject active in it, being independent of and superior to this subject and what he does or does not do. It does not owe anything at all to this human subject and his activity, his faith. What takes place in faith is simply that in a specific activity, which in this sense it to some extent expects, this objective *res* finds existence and essence and dignity and significance and scope, creating respect for itself and actually being respected in the presence of this activity—but only as it was already the object of this subject, only as it had all these things, existence, essence, dignity, significance and scope even for this subject, and without his activity and faith and respect. Faith is simply following, following its object. Faith is going a way which is marked out and prepared. Faith does not realise anything new. It does not invent anything. It simply finds that which is already there for the believer and also for the unbeliever. It is simply man's active decision for it, his acceptance of it, his active participation in it. This constitutes the Christian. In believing, the Christian owes everything to the object of his faith: the incomprehensible fact that he may not only be in relation to this object, but may be active in this being. The great advantage which he has over all others, and which he can never prize too highly, is that this object is not only there for him but that he for his part can be there for this object. It does not remain only a matter of its relationship with him. He himself enters into a relationship with it. This distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian. The object is like a circle enclosing all men and every individual man. In the case of the Christian this circle closes with the fact that he believes. In the case of non-Christians it is still open at the point where he ought to believe but does not yet believe, or no longer believes. The unbeliever has not accepted the relationship to that which is in relationship to him. He is abnormal in this respect. Faith is the normalising of the relationship between man and this object. It is the act in which man does that which this object demands, that which is proper to him in face of this object—the fulfilment of the correspondence to what this object is and means of itself for every man.

But enough of this formal description of the problem. The "object" of faith, the objective *res* subjectivised in faith, is Jesus Christ, in whom God has accomplished the reconciliation of the world, of all men with Himself—the living Jesus Christ Himself, in whom this occurrence, this fulfilment, this restoration of the broken covenant between God and man,

is not an event of the past, not a theoretical truth and doctrine, but for all humanity and all men (irrespective of their attitude to Him) a personal present, no, a present person. He, the living Jesus Christ, is the circle enclosing all men and every man and closed in Christian faith—the circle of divine judgment and divine grace. The great abnormality of unbelief consists in the perversion of the relationship to Him. The normalisation of the human relationship to him is the concern of faith as the human activity in which not all men but Christians are engaged. In the second section we will describe it as this activity. In the present section—because this is what determines it as activity—we will describe it as activity in this relationship of the Christian to Christ.

A first thing which characterises the Christian in this respect is the fact that it consists in the orientation of man on Jesus Christ. It is faith in Him. The man who believes looks to Him, holds to Him and depends on Him. He renounces all self-determination in His favour. To the fact that the circle objectively drawn around man closes in faith there corresponds the further fact that the closed circle of man's being is opened in faith whereas it remains closed in unbelief. In faith man ceases to be in control. He can be this only when he is not orientated on Jesus Christ, at any rate decisively, at the very centre of his being, with what the Bible calls his "heart." To describe this relationship we have already thought in terms of the "eccentric." In faith man is no longer in control at his centre. Or rather, at his centre, he is outside himself and therefore in control. The orientation on Jesus Christ which takes place in faith is not external and occasional. It is not one of the orientations in which he may find himself in his relationship with other things and persons. If he believes, this means that he can no longer fix his "heart" on other things (even the most important) or on other persons (even the dearest and most indispensable). At the centre of his being he is no longer here or there, but at this very definite place outside himself which cannot be exchanged for any other. His mind is then set (Col. 3:2) on "things above, not on things on the earth." "Things above" are not simply the other world generally. They are defined in Col. 3:1: "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." All other seeking or orientation is subordinate to this, in which it has its measure and law. All human striving for the beyond is exhausted in this. Man sees that it is an illusion that he can himself be in control at this centre, or that outside himself he can be in any other place, in other things or persons, or even in some other beyond. He is lifted above himself, but in the only direction in which this can take place. If a man believes, this means that he has found in Jesus Christ an object which does not merely concern him and concern him urgently, which does not merely call him to itself and therefore out of himself, which does not merely claim him, but which is the one

true object, which concerns him necessarily and not incidentally, centrally and not casually. It means that he has found in Him the true centre of himself which is outside himself. It means that he must now cling to Him, and depend on Him, that he finds that he belongs to Him.

We can say the same thing in another way. Faith is the human activity which is present and future, which is there, in the presence of the living Jesus Christ and of what has taken place in Him, with a profound spontaneity and a native freedom, but also with an inevitability in face of His actuality. The reverse is equally true: with an inevitability, but with a native freedom. "In the face of" means with eyes open for His actuality as it is before the eyes of all men. "We all with open face mirror the glory of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). How can the mirror be a mirror if it does not reflect that which faces it? Again, how can it reflect it if it is covered? Again, what is there of its own in that which is reflected by it? If it is not covered, what can it reflect but that which faces it? This reflecting of the glory of the Lord is made possible by the uncovering of the human face, by the seeing which is the result of this uncovering, by the fact that in this seeing man becomes the mirror of that which faces him, the "glory of the Lord," and, above all, by the "glory of the Lord" itself. It is the free but necessary work of faith which is completely bound to its object, which stands or falls with it and with its existence, essence, dignity, significance and scope. In this work man himself is nothing. He is not in control. He simply finds himself in that orientation. He accepts it. In it he sees and reaches out and grows beyond himself. In it he is for the first time faithful to himself. For as the doer of this work he loses his own life to find it again as he loses it (Mk. 8:35). This work can hardly be described as anything but renunciation in favour of the living Lord Jesus Christ. But as he does it, he does a genuine and free work, his own proper work. That is the first thing. Faith is in Jesus Christ. It is the action of the Christian in the face of this His Lord, in direct responsibility to Him, in renunciation in His favour.

The second thing that we have to say of faith in its relationship to Jesus Christ as its object is that, as it is related to, it is also based upon it.

We do not compromise its character as a free human act if we say that as a free human act—more genuinely free than any other—it has its origin in the very point on which it is also orientated. It is also the work of Jesus Christ who is its object. It is the will and decision and achievement of Jesus Christ the Son of God that it takes place as a free human act, that man is of himself ready and willing and actually begins to believe in Him. The two things are not a contradiction but belong together. If the Son makes us free, we are free indeed (Jn. 8:36). The Son makes a man free to believe in Him. Therefore faith in Him is the

act of a right freedom, not although but just because it is the work of the Son.

A man does not have this freedom unless the Son makes him free. The Christian is a sinful man like all others. In his proud heart, in consequence of the proud thoughts and words and acts which proceed from that heart, he is not ready and willing to accept that orientation on Jesus Christ. He is not free for the faith in which everything depends on renouncing. He is not prepared to lose his life in order to gain it. There is a great gulf between him and faith. It did not need to be so. It belongs basically and decisively to the good nature of man as God created it that he should be able to believe. Believing might have been more natural to him than breathing. He was created to be the covenant-partner of God and therefore for God. The gulf between him and faith is something contrary to nature. It is created only by his being in the act of pride. But it is there. And seeing that we are all radically involved in this act of pride, no one has ever surmounted it. Even the believing Christian has not done so. He knows that he ought not even to try. He knows that with all other men he is concluded in disobedience (Rom. 11:32), that it is the supreme pride and therefore the supreme fall of man if he undertakes to believe of himself, as though he could do so, as though he could make himself do it and move to do it. He may make the laborious and profoundly dishonest attempt to regard as true something which he cannot regard as true because it is too high for him. He may even make the further and still more painful effort to persuade himself that this convulsive acceptance is redemptive. But a self-fabricated faith is the climax of unbelief. Whatever a man may do in this way he never comes any nearer to faith. Indeed, he moves away from it. For in faith it is not a matter of this or that truth or this or that redemption, but of the person who is Himself truth and redemption. And in relation to this person it is not a matter of proposing and doing something for ourselves, but of following Him, of repeating His decision. But how can any man do that? The Christian knows—and the non-Christian experiences it in practice—that he can make nothing of this person in his own strength, that He remains always as inaccessible to him as sinful man as He is inimitable, that "in his own reason and strength he can neither believe in Him nor come to Him," that in his own reason and strength he will move instead in the very opposite direction. Whenever faith takes place in a man, it will always mean a swimming against this current—a counter-movement which is not undertaken in his own reason and strength. We do not forget that it is the counter-movement of a free human act. But the freedom of it is not the evil freedom which man in his pride has made for himself and which he thinks he can possess for himself and use for himself. As a genuine

freedom for this counter-movement it is completely alien to the personal reason and power of proud man entangled in his pride. It is a new freedom and therefore his true freedom. How can he procure it for himself when in his proud heart and the proud being determined by it he is not the one who can have it or win it or even know about it? How can he jump over his own shadow, which is to break free from himself as the one who casts this shadow? In other words, how can sinful man—there is an obvious *contradictio in adiecto* [contradiction in the phrase]—believe?

If we tried to give an answer to the question as put, to posit some supreme possibility of faith, our answer would be mistaken from the very outset. Seeing we have to do with sinful man, the mere "possibility" of faith would obviously be confronted by the other possibility which is the only true possibility, that of the man who in his own reason and strength simply goes with the current in the opposite direction. Who is to choose between them? Who is the man who will choose aright and therefore choose the possibility of faith? The only man who enters into the picture at all is the man who not only can go in the opposite direction, but actually does go in that direction, who not only has the possibility of choosing the sin of pride, but is a proud sinner from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. The possibility of faith may be very wonderful and it may be held out in a very attractive way, but what does it mean to him? In the rivalry between a possible faith and actual sin, faith will always come off second best. The rivalry will have ended in favour of sin even before it has begun. The whole idea of a possibility of faith confronted by that of unbelief, the whole conception of man as a Hercules at the crossroads able to choose between faith and sin (and therefore unbelief), is a pure illusion. Whatever may be the possibility of faith, this Hercules has always already chosen unbelief.

But there is a necessity of faith, and it is as we point to this that we shall give a sound answer to our question. Faith does not stand or hover somewhere in face of the possibility of unbelief (which is not a possibility but the solid actuality of sinful man). It is not itself a mere possibility, grand and attractive but impotent and useless like all mere possibilities. It has itself the character of an actuality, an actuality which is absolutely superior to that other actuality. In this superiority it is not a mere alternative to unbelief. It is not a mere chance, or proposition. It is not for man to choose first whether he himself will decide (what an illusion!) for faith or for unbelief. Faith makes the solid actuality of unbelief an impossibility. It sweeps it away. It replaces it by itself. It does not build a bridge over the gulf. It closes it. It has already closed it. This takes place in the necessity of faith in the strength of which the only act which remains for a man is the genuinely free act

of faith. This is its foundation. It is because this is its foundation that it is both negatively and positively so vigorous as the human act as which we still have to describe it. And it is because it is grounded in this necessity that when it takes place as a human act it has the adamantine, unquestioning and joyful certainty which characterises it and in which it cannot be compared even remotely with the certainty of any other human action.

But this necessity of faith does not lie in man. It does not lie even in the good nature of man as created for God, let alone in his being as the sinner who in denial and perversion of his good nature has turned away from God and in so doing deprived himself already of the possibility of faith. It does not even lie in faith in itself and as such. It is to be found rather in the object of faith. It is this object which forces itself necessarily on man and is in that way the basis of his faith. This object is the living Lord Jesus Christ, in whom it took place, in whom it has taken place for every man, in whom it confronts man as an absolutely superior actuality, that his sin, and he himself as the actual sinner he is, and with his sin the possibility of his unbelief, is rejected, destroyed and set aside, that he is born again as a new man of obedience, who now has the freedom for faith, and only in that faith his future. In this destroying and renewing of man as it took place in Jesus Christ there consists the necessity of faith, because beyond this destroying and renewing there remains for sinful man only faith in the One in whom it has taken place. In the death of Jesus Christ both the destroying and the renewing have taken place for all men, and the fact that they have taken place has been revealed as valid for all men in His resurrection from the dead. Therefore objectively, really, ontologically, there is a necessity of faith for them all. This object of faith is, in fact, the circle which encloses them all, and which has to be closed by every man in the act of his faith. Jesus Christ is not simply one alternative or chance which is offered to man, one proposition which is made to him. He is not put there for man's choice, *à prendre ou à laisser* [to take or to leave]. The other alternative is, in fact, swept away in Him.

> With Max v. Schenkendorf: "Arise, thou morning light,/Gone is the ancient night,/Which daily comes again." For, "The devil's claim of old,/On all our human fold,/Is forfeited and lost." And with Ambrosius Lobwasser: "For God's salvation everywhere,/From Heaven is sprinkled down,/That is, He has His own dear Son,/Sent down from heaven's highest throne,/That everything on earth,/In Him may have new birth."

With the divine No and Yes spoken in Jesus Christ the root of human unbelief, the man of sin, is pulled out. In its place there is put the root of faith, the new man of obedience. For this reason unbelief has become

an objective, real and ontological impossibility and faith an objective, real and ontological necessity for all men and for every man. In the justification of the sinner which has taken place in Jesus Christ these have both become an event which comprehends all men.

And it is the awakening power of the Holy Spirit that this impossibility as such and this necessity as such so confront a man and illuminate him that he does the only objective, real and ontological thing which he can do, not omitting or suppressing or withholding but necessarily speaking the Yes of the free act which corresponds to it, choosing that for which he is already chosen by the divine decision, and beside which he has no other choice, that is to say, faith. How can he have faith if not in this way? The divine decision is not made and cannot be made in him, in his spirit. It can only be repeated. For how can he destroy himself as the old man, posit himself as the new, and therefore free himself for the true freedom in which he can believe? But, again, how can he have anything else in that way but the freedom to believe? Of himself he may have many other things, very many: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." But not in that way. In that way he can have only the freedom to believe. And how can the fact that he believes be anything meaner or weaker or more doubtful than an absolute necessity, his most proper and inward necessity, to obey which is not something strange but self-evident? No other human action is self-evident. But the action of faith is the doing of the self-evident—just because it takes place in the free choice beside which man has no other choice, so that it is his genuinely free choice. The Holy Spirit is the power in which Jesus Christ the Son of God makes a man free, makes him genuinely free for this choice and therefore for faith. He is the power in which the object of faith is also its origin and basis, so that faith can know and confess itself only as His work and gift, as the human decision for this object, the human participation in it which he makes in his own free act but which he can only receive, which he can understand only as something which is received, which he can continually look for as something which is received again and which has to be confirmed in a new act. It is not that he is strong when he believes. But the One in whom he believes shows Himself to be strong over him when he believes—strong as the One who is raised again from the dead to awaken him first from the death of unbelief to the life of faith. Faith means to be awake on the basis of this awakening: to be awake to the strong One who awakens him and who alone can awaken him; to be awake to the necessity with which He does this, a necessity which excludes all pseudo-freedoms; to be awake to the self-evident nature of the arising which, on the part of man, will directly follow his awakening. Faith is at once the most wonderful and the simplest of things. In

it a man opens his eyes and sees and accepts everything as it—objectively, really and ontologically—is. Faith is the simple discovery of the child which finds itself in the father's house and on the mother's lap. But this simple thing is also the mystery of faith because only in Jesus Christ is it true and actual that things are as man discovers them, and because man's own discovery can itself be an event only in the fact that man is again awakened by Him to see and accept everything as it is: that the night has passed and the day dawned; that there is peace between God and sinful man, revealed truth, full and present salvation. This simple thing, and this mystery, constitute the being of the Christian, his being by the One in whom he believes.

We now come to a third and decisive thing. Indeed, in the narrower context in which we are now speaking, it can also be the final thing. This is that in the twofold relationship of faith to Jesus Christ, as faith is oriented and based on Him as its object, there takes place in it the constitution of the Christian subject. At a later stage we shall have to understand faith as the particular human action of this subject. And we do not forget that it becomes and is this subject only in this action: not on the basis of a creaturely character of this action as such, but in virtue of the fact that as it is orientated so it is also based on Jesus Christ. Yet it is also true, and we must say it expressly, that in this action there begins and takes place a new and particular being of man.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 1:30). "For we are his workmanship (ποίημα), created (κτισθέντες) in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again" (ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς, I Pet. 1:3)–an expression which is expounded in 1:23: "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." New being, new creation (Gal. 6:15, II Cor. 5:17), new birth–they are all predicates which are ascribed only to the Christian, and they are all too strong to be taken only as figurative expressions to describe the changed feelings and self-understanding of Christians. Christians do not lose their character as members of the race which God created good and which fell from Him. But in these predicates they are addressed as something other than those with whom in other respects they are still bound in the twofold solidarity of creatureliness and sin. We read in Act. 11:26 that they were first called χριστιανοί [Christians] in Syrian Antioch, a name of which we read in I Pet. 4:16 that it pledged them to glorify God. That to be a bearer of this name involves a real change of the form of human existence seems to come out in Agrippa's ironical words to Paul as reported in Ac. 26:28: "Almost thou persuadest me to be made (ποιῆσαι) a Christian." It is not without theological significance that this name–that the fact that these folk are adherents of Christ–should have prevailed. And it is not only in Acts and the Pastoral Epistles that what distinguishes them as adherents

is described by the term πιστοί [faithful]. We find the same in II Cor. 6:15, where they are contrasted with the ἄπιστοι [unfaithful] of their heathen environment, under whose yoke they are not to submit, with whom they can have no μετοχή [sharing], no κοινωνία [fellowship], no συμφώνησις [agreement], no μερίς [portion]. Being themselves ἐκ πίστεως [participants in faith], they have a part in the blessing of πιστὸς Ἀβραάμ [faith of Abraham] (Gal. 3:9). πιστός [faith] can be used either as a substantive or as an adjective. In II Cor. 6:15 it is absolute. In Col. 1:1, Eph. 1:1, I Pet. 1:21 and Ac. 16:15 it is related to Christ or to the God who raised Him from the dead. In Col. 1:1 and Eph 1:1 it is set in juxtaposition with the term ἅγιοι [saints], clearly emphasising that which marks off subjectively those who are described in this way. That it is an abbreviation for πιστεύοντες [those who are faithful] or ὄντες ἐκ πίστεως [being among the faithful] is evident from Jn. 20:27: μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος, ἀλλὰ πιστός [Do not be faithless, but faithful]. The translation "faithful" seems unavoidable. If only it did not carry the suggestion of a psychological consistency which is not conveyed in the very least by πιστός [faith]! This does, of course, speak of a being of those who are described in this way, of the being of which they are participants as they are πιστεύοντες [those who are faithful], but of the being of which they are real and objective participants in the fulfilment of this act and as the subjects of it. Just as the sinful man is what he does as such, so he is what he does when as a sinful man he is awakened to faith and can live by it.

We recall that the creaturely subject constituted in the being and work of Jesus Christ is seriously and definitively the new man himself as he is brought into peace with God from his struggle against Him, and is therefore a partaker of the salvation allotted to him. It is the world as it is loved by God and reconciled by Him to Himself in Jesus Christ. The faith which has Jesus Christ for its object is therefore faith in this being and action of His for the world, for all men and for every man. And those who can believe in Him—in Paul's phrase, those who are of faith (of faith in Him)—are the first-fruits and representatives of the humanity and the world to which God has addressed Himself in Jesus Christ. It is their business to give to the God who has done this, to "the living God who is the Saviour of all men" (I Tim. 4:10), the glory which the others do not give Him, and in so doing to attest to them that which they do not know although it avails for them. What Christians have in and for themselves in the sharply differentiated particularity of their being they have as the bearers and representatives of a specially qualified and emphasised solidarity with all other men.

That the living God of I Tim. 4:10 is "specially" (μάλιστα) the Saviour of those that believe means that in the first instance—in His activity to and with them as the spearhead of the whole cosmos, concretely revealed to

them and concretely known by them, demanding their concrete service—He is a Saviour for them.

We recollect further that the creaturely subject awakened in this special sense by God through the power of the Holy Spirit is the Christian community in the world: the "We" who pray the Lord's Prayer or simply cry "Abba, Father," the "You" who are reminded in the apostolic message of their origin and nature, the people drawn from both Jews and Gentiles which is, as such, the body whose Head is Jesus Christ, the people in which His truth is known in obedience, and acknowledged in humility and confessed in thankfulness, the people which lives and builds up itself to be a light shining in the world (Phil. 2:15) in reflection of His glory. This people as such is the provisional representation of the justification which has taken place in Jesus Christ. The faith which has Him as its object is as such faith in Him as the Creator and Lord of the fellowship of the saints. It is faith as it lives by and for and in and with this fellowship—the faith of this fellowship and as such the faith of individual Christians. Just as a man would not be a man in and for himself, in isolation from his fellow-men, so a Christian would not be a Christian in and for himself, separated from the fellowship of the saints. With his personal faith he is a member of this body of Christ. In the New Testament sense of the term this does not involve any deficiency in his own being and having in relation to that of the whole. It does not involve any limitation of his responsibility by that of the whole or of the others who are in this whole with him. It does not involve, therefore, any diminution of the freedom of his faith. As a member of this body he is in direct touch with its Head. As he believes in and with the community—he does it as a whole, for it is only as a whole that he is a member—the whole with its gift and commission is his whole, and he believes with a royal freedom. What it does involve is that he can believe only in and with the community, only in the sphere and context of it, only in the limitation and determination set by its basis and goal. The royal freedom of his faith is the freedom to stand in it as a brother or a sister, to stand with other brothers and sisters in the possession granted to it and the service laid upon it. If faith is outside the Church it is outside the world, and therefore a-Christian. It does not have as its object "the Saviour of all men, and specially of them that believe."

But when all that is said and considered, we have to add at once that the creaturely subject constituted in the being and work of Jesus Christ and awakened as such by the power of the Holy Spirit is in the last resort the individual Christian in the act of his personal faith. The humanity and world loved by God, fallen from Him and reconciled by

Him to Himself, lives in individual men and their particular creatureliness and sin. And the community founded and preserved and ruled by Jesus Christ in the world lives in individual Christians and the multifarious but unitary activity of their faith. There are no saints without the fellowship, but there is no fellowship without the saints. If there is no Christian I and Thou and He outside the twofold, Christ-centered circle of the We and You and They of the race and the community, then the general no less than the particular is an abstraction, not to say an illusion, since it does not become event in the Christian I and Thou and He, in the personal faith of the members of the body of Christ.

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Thus the faith of the "subject" and the "object" of faith are caught up in an orderly relationship. In this living unity the priority is clearly with Christ. Only his unparalleled unity with God's own work and purpose is inclusive enough to embrace the whole world in its compass. Where the response of faith in the Church and in Christian individuals closes the circle, still open at the points of remaining unbelief, this is a "provisional representation of the justification which has taken place in Jesus Christ." The response of faith anticipates the day when all gaps caused by unbelief will be closed. Then all creation will be open to God in the name and power of Christ.

In this way Barth helps to round out the developing faith-truth story. We began with the question of how the subject gets to the object in a truth relation. Now the question has been reversed. How can the subject participate in a truth relation already established—already realized in Jesus Christ? For Barth, the subject of faith is "normalized" in its orientation toward the object by the power and grace of the Object itself.

It remains for the present stage in the development of Christian thought to carry this post-Cartesianism even further. We need to reflect in our faith thinking, speaking, and acting an even greater openness to the world and to ordinary truth claims and procedures. We shall then discover the extent to which the "truth of faith" uncovers itself in the form of everyday realities. We shall see that the normative center of faith is not some object set apart, but a man who lived and was subjected to death on a cross. The truth enacted in that quite earthly event of history continues to shape society and the life of faith, in the direction of its own anticipations of what we are becoming in the purposes of God.

Chapter Fourteen

A SUBJECT-OBJECT TYPOLOGY

We turn again to a summary of our topic in the form of types of answers or alternatives of thought.

1. The Object Marked Off from and Controlled by the Subject

The authoritarian standards of truth of the medieval world were first conspicuously broken into by Descartes, who judged truth or falsehood on the basis of "clear and distinct intellectual ideas." Despite his recognition that man may be fallible, he felt a guarantee of truth in a certain clarity of realization. Thus he set an abstract-thinking subject over against what we call the objective, measurable world. The split between them formulated by Descartes underlies most of the discussions of the question of truth since that time.

Until the nineteenth century the fundamental separation of subject and object was assumed almost without question. To some extent it became a matter of priority, like the old query about the hen and the egg. Here however it was a matter of emphasis, or more basic importance, rather than sequence. Continental Idealism (Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Hegel) tended to dwell on the greater sureness, or à priori character, of the thinking subject. British empiricism, on the other hand (Hobbes, Locke, Hume), felt the priority of objective experience. In both cases, in varying degrees, subject and object remained generally walled off from each other. The subject was the person perceiving, the object the thing or person perceived.

Descartes' criterion of truth seems wholly subjective, but his principle of verification was that of "procedural doubt." In the course of doubting more or less all round, he came to realize that he could not doubt the existence of himself in the act of doubting. The extension of space around him also seemed "clear and distinct." Moreover, he could not doubt that there was a relation of some kind between his own rational activity and the measurable world. The result was a thinking subject on one

hand, which kept in view a separated object on the other. The two were held together by confidence in the possibilities of agreement between them.

The method of "procedural doubt" has become increasingly current in the world and is a cornerstone of modern scientific thought. Conceived along this line, from these beginnings, the truth of faith consists chiefly of an extension of the central self-certainty. It is discovered and verified from the self outward—from the side of the subject. Faith is mainly a movement, a reaching out, of the subject toward its object. This determines the relation of the subject (or person) to its object (or God) far more than any awareness of action by the object.

2. *The Affective Relation to the Object*

In contrast to those who follow the Cartesian line as to the priority of the thinking subject are those who emphasize the objectivity of truth (in our modern sense). By and large, they have also accepted the sharp demarcation between subject and object so carefully worked out by Descartes. What they do not accept as a standard for truth is the definition of "clear and distinct ideas" in the mind of the subject. Locke and those who follow him think of the subject as a blank page (*tabula rasa*) until written upon by objective reality in the form of direct experience. For Locke, Hume, and others, the subject's real capacity is limited to an intuition of agreement or disagreement. Edwards adds to this the sense of threat and promise, and the response of "affection" as well as cognition. Thus he can speak of a person's "reasonable affection."[1]

Truth from this point of view, despite all its variations, consists in the agreement of words and symbols with the experience to which they point. Falseness consists in a discrepancy between verbal expression and the shape or nature of primary experience. For instance, words may lose their connection with the kind of experience that gave rise to them. They are then used with little or no meaning. In noting this, Edwards mentions the constant need of theology to clarify its language in relation to basic human experience. A very similar criterion of truth and falsehood is that of the modern linguistic analysts. Ian Ramsey, for instance, tries to clarify the relation between the term *revelation* and the basic experience of "disclosure" in which the object becomes subjective.[2]

Approached in this way, the truth can be verified in terms of some sort of immediate experience available to others, and this fact constitutes

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[1] *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections.*

[2] A systematic discussion of this may be found in Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (London: Camelot Press, 1957), and more recently in his *Models and Mystery* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

a part of the verification. The affective response of the subject ranges through degrees of agreement and disagreement (Locke). It may include the added intuitions of attraction and repulsion, threat and promise, beauty and ugliness, benevolence and hatred (Edwards). The subject may even suddenly discover that what is being objectively described is really himself (Ramsey).[3] In each case, the truth of the object is verified and validated in its affective relationship to the subject (the thinking person).

3. *The Subject in Paradoxical Relation to the Object*

In the last two ways of judging truth and falseness, the point of departure is a recognition of distance between subject (thinker) and object (what is perceived). A third approach, that of Kierkegaard chiefly, begins with the same distinction and distance, but looks upon it very differently. The emphasis here is on the fundamental uncertainty of *any* kind of objective truth. Thus truth in Kierkegaard's view lies rather in the *relation* of the subject (thinker) to the object (thing or being perceived) *in the face of* objective uncertainty.

Here truth itself is measured by the absolute paradox of the relationship between subject and object. The thinking self cannot know objective reality as it is, unless the object submits itself to such knowledge. That universal objective reality should lend itself to the limitations of finite knowledge is logically inconceivable. Descartes' demarcation of subject and object and Lessing's broad ditch are in evidence here. For the subject to relate itself to the object in the face of this insoluble uncertainty is to exist in a paradox, by which truth itself is measured (Kierkegaard). To claim greater and more direct access to truth is to fall into falseness.

Truth is validated, in this case, not by clear and distinct ideas, nor yet in terms of agreement with language associations, but rather by the "passionate inwardness" of the subject in the midst of the "dread of existence." That is, by depth of dedication or discipleship rather than any certainty from outside. In choosing to exist in the midst of Descartes' doubt, or to leap across Lessing's big ditch, the subject reaches the object in the only accessible way. The way is his own total willingness rather than objective certitude. His uncertainty means that subjective existence is marked by dread, by "fear and trembling." To approach the object is to "will to be a self" in the midst of apprehension.

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[3] Ramsey, in his *Religious Language*, chap. I, gives a number of illustrations of situations involving "commitment" and "discernment." His instances are in direct contrast to the thought of those linguistic analysts who have until recently insisted that there is no generally accessible experience to which religious language may be related. Perhaps the greatest popularizer of this position was A. J. Ayer in his book *Language, Truth and Logic,* though Ayer later somewhat modified his stand.

Here is the Kantian dictum upside down! The subject lives in the truth not by universalizing his existence, but by wholeheartedly particularizing it. Acceptance of the individual and the particular offers the only possible access to the universal. Thus *truth,* as Kierkegaard describes it, has the immediate and clear ring of *faith,* and faith is related to its object not by external but by internal dedication. Not only is the divinity of Jesus, for instance, impossible to demonstrate to us now. He existed incognito even for his disciples,[4] except as they had faith. The truth of faith is available only in the decision for faith, in discipleship. Faith is a decisive relationship in the midst of the void.

From this point of view, also, we must understand Bultmann's "eschatological" decision. Faith that is lively and strong is, for him, a gift which comes in spite of the lack of external supports. To know the truth of Christ we must be responsive to God's gracious deed in the man on the cross, even though faith can in no way be shored up by historical evidence or rational argument.

4. Subject and Object Grounded Beyond Themselves

A fourth approach to the relation between subject and object has emerged, quite different from those so far mentioned. Schleiermacher, Heidegger, Tillich, and Barth all accept both subjective and objective aspects of life. (This is speaking now with the modern use of "subjective" and "objective.") In this they agree with the three views mentioned above. However, they all differ in one significant way from the other three types. They refuse to give any decisive priority to either subject or object. Both exist in a fundamental relationship. Each is totally enmeshed in the other.

Truth, from this last point of view, lies in this basic interrelatedness itself. It is seen in the fundamental interdependence of the self and the world. Nor are they joined together like spokes of a wheel, attached but individually separate. In the moment of truth, they are seen to be parts of the same being—parts of a basic unity that exists under and beyond the limitations of the subject-object contrast. The moment of disclosure does not change the separation of the two in human life. It reveals, rather, an elemental unity that endures within and through the subject-object opposition.

The four thinkers mentioned above have somewhat different ways of expressing the combination of this separation of subject and object with

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[4] A discussion of "incognito" may be found in Kierkegaard's *Training in Christianity,* Walter Lowrie, trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 127–32.

the unity that persists between them. Schleiermacher speaks of "sensible" (i.e., sensory) self-consciousness that is either filled with God-consciousness or closed off from it. Heidegger speaks of existence (*Dasein*) of which the truth (*aletheia*) is its "disclosedness." It moves within the limits of what he has labeled as "thrownness" (the given setting in which we find ourselves), "projection" (our trait of constantly reaching out toward a future), and "falling" (the fact that our present conditions continually cease to be). Tillich speaks of ecstatic participation in the "depths of reason"—of purpose, dedication, concern. He notes warningly the difference between this and technical reason, involving tools and means only. Finally, Barth speaks of election, and of "normalizing" existence by infusing into ordinary concrete experience the life of Christ. This is the *normal* state of human life for which we are made, as opposed to incompleteness and sin. The infusion takes place when we completely accept Christ rather than self as our center. Thus we close his all-encompassing circle around us. We ourselves are then completely open to him and to the neighbor.

Here validation of truth—the proof it it—comes in being received, accepted, disclosed. The subject is elected by the truth, shaken, grasped. The truth is disclosed, received, accepted, its depths and foundations uncovered. The disclosure of truth cuts under the polarities of life and comes as a "sense of absolute dependence," an "uncoveredness," and "ecstatic standing outside oneself." It is an election to life in Jesus Christ in the midst of what has been called "absolute receptivity" or openness.

This basic vision bears no relation to external agreement between subject and object, or the completeness of a concept. To approach truth by the separate way of subject and object is, according to this view, to substitute a single dimension for the larger whole. Here the truth of faith is not primarily concerned with an impassable gulf between subject and object, but far more with the kinds of occasions by which the fundamental unity of truth is uncovered.

Chapter Fifteen

FAITH AND TRUTH: THE DEVELOPING STORY

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

The story of the truth of faith revolves around the problem of how the believing person is related to the object of his belief. We have discovered a number of solutions to this problem. Some focus primarily upon the subject or person, others upon the object, still others upon the quality of the relation between them. The various solutions, and the problem itself, must always be seen in their cultural setting. It is important to realize that faith both shapes historical circumstances and responds to them.

René Descartes' classic expression of this problem is closely related to the breakdown of the medieval world and the rise of the modern era. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were awhirl with geographical exploration. Older beliefs about the shape of the earth, beliefs held for thousands of years, crumbled with every new discovery. New mathematics needed for navigation challenged older modes of calculating. The new religious ideas of the Reformation, and the development of new nations, brought radical innovations in ways of thinking.

Little wonder that Descartes struck a responsive chord when he challenged traditional methods of arriving at truth. If the certainty of past doctrines no longer held steady, where could men find assurance? Descartes' solution was to rest his confidence in the self. The relation of the ego to its environment became a secondary affair, and the world an object for neutral—though passionate—exploration. The net effect was to cut the object away from the subject, to be recovered only by observation, measurement, and control.

Increasingly our own age is concerned with the problem that so preocupied Descartes. But his solution no longer seems to satisfy. The rise of modern science has not dispelled the enigmatic and opaque character of the extended cosmos. The isolated ego is often lonely and tortured in its separation. In various ways the men whose ideas we have explored have tried to recast the problem.

Jonathan Edwards was not content to leave the self so sharply marked off from its environment, though he was much impressed with the objective reality of that larger context. Writing in early eighteenth-century New England, he shared with his countrymen his sense of the vastness of the new world waiting to be pioneered. Newtonian physics had demonstrated the power of rising science. A melting pot of various religious traditions, the American colonies were swept by religious revivals in what was called the Great Awakening. Yet along with his new concepts, Edwards retained a strong appreciation for classical philosophy.

Given the Cartesian division between the self and the world to be measured, Edwards represents those most impressed by objectivity. Following Locke in his description of an external reality that imposes itself on the waiting subject, he found truth primarily in empirical experience. But he speaks of the "heart" that is attracted and repelled, that loves and hates what is objectively present. The "sense of the heart" ties the self to its objective environment. It connects the believing subject with the object of religious devotion. In a way that is very contemporary, Edwards was working toward a type of confessional empiricism.

At the turn of the eighteenth century the impressive power of science cast serious doubt upon the assurances of faith. To a society of "cultured despisers of religion" Friedrich Schleiermacher defended its integrity. Middle Europe had seen the rise of a variety of independent religious groupings, of which the Moravians most directly influenced him. Like most German thinkers, he was wary of the excesses of the French Revolution, yet impressed by its idealism. To express a faith appropriate to the modern world of his day was his passion.

In his own way he, too, tried to get beyond the separation of subject and object in speaking of human consciousness. The truth of faith—God-consciousness—cannot be equated with either the handling of external things or an interior sense of moral obligation. It comes rather in the underlying realm of "feeling." With this formulation Schleiermacher hoped to bridge the hiatus between the objective knowledge of science and the more nearly subjective knowledge of ethics. Feeling is equally related to both. At the same time he made a great effort to solve the Cartesian problem by describing faith as a feeling that permeates the whole range of primitive consciousness as well as our more advanced awareness of the world. In this way he hoped to reconcile the divisive tendencies that troubled the religion of his day.

Kierkegaard lived only a generation removed from Schleiermacher and thus shares many of the same cultural circumstances. Far more than most of his contemporaries, however, he was aware of oppressive totalitarian leanings in nineteenth-century culture, as well as the destructive possibilities of the physical sciences. He wanted to call men away from a mass society, especially when cloaked in complacent religious sanctions.

He wanted to draw them away from a science that alienated the self from its world. Thus Kierkegaard helped to forge the notions of an "existing individual" and "truth as subjectivity."

Here we do not have the optimistic subjectiveness of Descartes, but a dread acknowledgment of the unstable character of all external reality. The objective world cannot be recovered by methods of observation and control, piece by piece. Truth comes only in authentic inner decision. Ostensibly Cartesian in his focus on the self, Kierkegaard goes considerably beyond Descartes in calling for courage. This is courage to exist, a courage that cannot be "clearly and distinctly" experienced in Descartes' version of undoubted reality. But the problem remained, for Kierkegaard by his radical solution left the conscious subject even more separated from the objective world than before.

The twentieth century continues to search for a way past Descartes' problem. Heidegger, Tillich, and Barth, each in his own way makes the effort. They share the formative events that so drastically shape their time. They have seen the rise and steady influence of Marxism over much of Europe, the discovery of the deeper impulses of the personality in psychoanalysis, the transforming power of the physical and social sciences, Einstein's theory of relativity, an increasing historical consciousness. Different as their views are, all three have been conditioned by such formative developments as two world wars, the fateful discovery and use of atomic energy, the emergence of totalitarian nationalism, and the population explosion.

Heidegger laments the "absence of Being," the "abandonment by Being," the "concealedness of Being," or the "closedness of Being" characterizing these times. His philosophy is directed toward a recovery of man's openness to Being itself, by which the terrible tensions between man and his world may be healed. Tillich in a similar way calls for a recovery of the "depth of reason" to overcome the demonic tendencies of technology. He calls for a faith that has "the courage to be" in the very midst of radical historical change. Barth is spokesman for the power of a transcendent grace that is able to move against the stream of destructive political and economic developments. Grace is available and active in our own history, as in the person of Jesus Christ.

Each of these men tries somehow to get beyond the Cartesian rift between the self and its world, between man and the object of his faith.

TRUTH AND THE MOVEMENT TOWARD POST-CARTESIANISM

The term "post-Cartesianism" may well be used to denote an approach to truth that tries to discover the underlying relatedness between subject and object rather than the gulf between them. It assumes a fundamental

assurance, wholeness, and reliability in the relation between the self and its world. This relation does not simply ride above change but lives in the midst of it, and is shaped and altered in the process.

Our story of changing cultural context has led quite directly to the contributions of such men as Heidegger, Tillich, and Barth. They have opened up new possibilities in the understanding of faith and truth. We shall review here their thrust toward what we are calling post-Cartesianism, and then see how others in the story have anticipated it.

In Heidegger's view man can no longer conceive of himself as separate from his world. He is in the world, and the world is in him. Being there (*Dasein*) is a more fundamental reality than either the subjectivity or objectivity of experience. By conceiving of himself in Cartesian terms, sharply set off from his world and manipulating it, man has become unresponsive to the fullness of Being. Furthermore, Being is present to him only in the changing temporality of existence—not in some remote and isolated, transcendent realm. Man must accept and live within his finite nature and his life in time. The truth is a reality that illumines his involvement in both subjectivity and objectivity.

The starting point for what Heidegger calls "primal thinking" is the disclosure of Being rather than human consciousness. This emphasizes the "uncovered" aspect of another kind of truth from that of agreement between subject and object. It underlies that question, yet also exists within it. Where the focus is upon this kind of truth—*aletheia* or disclosedness—what is humanly required is openness and receptivity rather than manipulation.

This general outlook, with Heidegger as its important spokesman, has been given theological form in this century chiefly by Tillich and Barth. Tillich has argued repeatedly for recovery of the "depth" lost to the faculty of reason in our age. He points and works toward a responsibly open culture (theonomous) that is not subject to the tyranny of totalitarian tendencies (heteronomous) nor to the caprice of unrestrained impulse (autonomous). He speaks of a faith that is able to absorb the radical changes brought by time. He refers to truth as the presence of a healing relation between subject and object, even though their separateness can never be totally eliminated. Existentialist and Heideggerian tendencies are combined in Tillich's theology. He also stands on the border between culture and kerygma. This is the delicate boundary between reason at a depth that can be called ecstasy and specific faith in Jesus Christ. All these poles and tensions must be seen in correlation. God is not an "object" among objects. He is Being as such, or the ground of all being. Jesus Christ fulfills the claim of ultimate truth as the one symbol most completely transparent to life in its infinite depths, or to Being as such.

Barth is more radically Christological. The concrete being of Christ, rather than human consciousness or even "Being as such," is for him the starting point. From it everything flows: faith thinking and acting, theology and ethics. In the historical being of Christ we find true humanity. In him subject and object come together. He is the forgiving Subject for whom all other men are objects, and the gracious Object for whom they are subjects. His being and history, though constantly reinterpreted, are the criterion for every other being and every other history.

In the strength of this emphasis, Barth stands out from predecessors and contemporaries alike. Christ is the object of faith. But the Object controls—not the inquiring subject. Faith involves sharing in the being and truth of the Object. Thus the self has a radical openness. When he responds in faith, the Christian discovers himself anew in Jesus Christ and in the community of which Christ is the ground. The believer's being (once closed in unbelief) is opened by sharing in the truth of him whose perfect human nature it is to be open to God and to the neighbor. Barth tries to express a view of truth that is liable neither to Cartesian separation from the world nor to totalitarian distortion.

If we look back from the point to which Tillich and Barth have brought us, we can see various strands in the faith-truth story emerge. Edwards began with Being rather than human consciousness, and in the object rather than the human subject of faith. Truth for him was a vision of all-inclusive Being and a consequent falling into place of lesser being in relation to that One beyond the many. This, rather than mere agreement between subjective knowledge and its object. He saw in the depths of life despair and hope, threat and promise, as genuine modes of human existence. In these perceptions he has a surprisingly contemporary tone, moving toward Tillich and Barth. Tillich differs in his development of existentialist motifs as one side of his perspective. And he has affinity not only with neo-Platonic tradition but with Heidegger. Barth, in turn, diverges in his insistence on the specific being of Jesus Christ rather than Being in general as a starting point. He also has a preference for theological rather than philosophical ways of stating the issues.

Schleiermacher, too, broke with the Renaissance conception of truth as manipulation and control of the object, which is the basis of the external development of science. For him, beneath the interplay between subject and object—beneath the mixed freedom and dependence of human consciousness—comes the religious moment. God is not to be thought of as an object in the sense of person or world. His reality is disclosed to the individual in a consciousness of absolute dependence. The mood is receptivity rather than self-caused action. Nor may we speak of Jesus of Nazareth as a "faith object" without considerable care. If human consciousness is awakened to the need and reality of its own redemption—

a restored God-consciousness—then Christ helps to create this awakened state.

Thus Schleiermacher moves quite far from Cartesianism. Tillich is fairly close to this perspective, although his boundary position orients him also toward the kerygmatic tendencies in modern theology. Barth, as usual, differs by wanting to begin with the being of Christ rather than human consciousness. For him the starting point for "primal thinking" in faith and ethics is truth as disclosed concretely in Jesus Christ. Here the movement is from revelation to a more general type of religious experience rather than the reverse.

Kierkegaard used the subject-object categories in his thinking, but he too was out of step with his culture and clearly heralded the present day. For him the truth of faith is understood in terms of *how* rather than *what*. Jesus of Nazareth, the absolute paradox of the God-man, is the object of faith experienced in passionate inwardness—not given to the neutral observer. Truth is not in any sense an object, if by this is meant a controllable entity. Faith is passion in the face of paradox, existing without objective support. Passion (somewhat like "piety" in Schleiermacher's analysis) cuts beneath the subject-object polarity. And even as piety moves toward absolute dependence, so passion with Kierkegaard reaches into what amounts to absolute objective uncertainty.

Here surely are elements of a post-Cartesian temper. Yet Kierkegaard's stress on existentialism may have prevented him from breaking completely through to the idea of truth as an uncoveredness beyond both subject and object. The subject, qualified paradoxically in relation to the object, is stressed. Tillich's approach retains noticeable elements of a Kierkegaardian type of paradox, especially in existential experience of the gospel. Faith is that centered act of the total person whose proof comes at the point of courage to accept doubt or uncertainly into itself.

Barth diverges more sharply from Kierkegaard with his focus on grace and truth in Jesus Christ. The relationship shows up the falsity of the subject, in the light of truth of the object. Not absolute dependence nor absolute uncertainty, but absolute receptivity toward its Object—here is where Barth's post-Cartesianism leads him. Faith itself functions for him somewhat like piety for Schleiermacher and passion for Kierkegaard. Thus the movement from Schleiermacher (evangelical liberalism) to Kierkegaard (existentialism) to Barth (neo-orthodoxy) is marked by both continuity and disconnections.

Ever since Descartes, much attention has been given to the search for definitions of truth and reason. That is, reason functioning in the area of man's deepest and highest experience, whether in religion, literature, the arts, or wherever. Tillich's views of "ecstatic" reason and Barth's stress on the truth of Christ may both be seen as efforts in this direction. This is

within the framework of Heidegger's demand for a kind of primal thinking that will cut beneath rationalized approaches and structures of a technological society.

The problem of the truth of faith posed by Descartes is no more finally answered today than in previous generations. Circumstances in the twentieth century continue to change, as do all events in time. It seems clear that so long as the issue is posed in terms of the relation between subject and object, their interrelatedness needs to be discovered in far more immediate terms than before. Almost certainly a new era in theology is beginning, in which the truth of faith will emerge as an involvement of the self and the world in ways only dimly sensed in earlier accounts.

CURRENT TRENDS: 1. THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Modern Christian thought is working hard to discover bridges between faith and general experience. In briefly charting the more recent trends we can be neither comprehensive nor definitive. Our aim is simply to bring the reader as directly as possible into the contemporary discussion, with background perspective from the developing story as we have seen it.

One effort to create such a bridge between faith and the factual sense of truth in ordinary life is being pursued today in conversations between the disciplines of theology and philosophy. Heinrich Ott has been working toward a synthesis of the thought and tendencies of Bultmann, Barth, and Heidegger.[1] We have noted Heidegger's call for thinking that recalls the truth of Being in its disclosedness. Such truth, or "unhiddenness," is more fundamental than the objective categories of metaphysics and science. But "forgetfulness of being prevails." These disciplines are generally, and quite rightly, concerned with objectified beings. They lack the power to "think their own ground."

Ott finds here a clue to fuller interpretation between theology and philosophy. The task is more difficult from the side of Bultmann, who retains a type of Kierkegaardian dualism. He stresses authenticity through both existential decision and the working of divine grace. Barth's approach to theology, on the other hand, emphasizes more an openness to the being of Jesus Christ, in which control is from that side. Ott has been working toward a rapprochement between Barthian theology and Heideggerian philosophy. What he has in mind is an approach to systematic theology in which the stress is on an experiential, nonobjectifying type of "primal thinking." He finds this procedure promising, because it per-

[1] See his focal article, "What Is Systematic Theology?" in *New Frontiers in Theology*, Vol. I, *The Later Heidegger and Theology*, James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., eds. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

mits systematic theology to be itself and yet engage in fruitful dialog with philosophical tendencies along the way.

Not all who seek a closer relation between theology and philosophy follow Heidegger's lead so strictly. Another thrust is toward the recovery of Whitehead's philosophy in newer perspective. John B. Cobb, Jr. contends that this sort of speculative philosophy provides a way in which "God-language" may be properly affirmed in this demythologized age. This is his ground for opposing the program of Thomas Altizer and others who are trying to make the "death of God" into a theological axiom. As Cobb says, "The horizon of history must be supplemented by the horison of metaphysics."[2]

Still another development in this area is the stepped-up attention of theologians to the philosophical movement known as linguistic analysis. Paul M. van Buren's work, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel,* is dramatic evidence of theology's determination to take this approach seriously. Two other books illustrate this particular kind of effort to understand the truth of faith through dialog with general culture: Frederick Pond Ferré's *Language, Logic and God*[3] and William Hordern's *Speaking of God.*[4] These studies try to recast the language of faith into common speech. They deliberately avoid a specialized theological vocabulary that will inevitably separate faith from everyday experience.

CURRENT TRENDS: 2. IN SEARCH OF A NEW HERMENEUTIC

Along with these efforts to establish a closer relation between theology and philosophy, a second movement has had considerable impetus. In the "new hermeneutic" again quite complex issues come into play. Some are involved in the "new quest of the historical Jesus," mentioned earlier.[5] One may note the work of Gerhard Ebeling as an important contributor to this discussion.[6] He fulfills very directly our impression that theology

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[2] John B. Cobb, Jr., "Christianity and Myth," *Journal of Bible and Religion,* Vol. XXXIII, No. 4 (October 1965), p. 317. See also his recent work entitled *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Theology of Alfred North Whitehead* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965). In this same connection the reader is referred to Schubert Ogden's *Christ Without Myth: A Study Based on the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), where one finds a mingling of suggestions drawn from Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and Rudolf Bultmann.

[3] New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961.

[4] New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964.

[5] See pp. 164–165.

[6] See his "Word of God and Hermeneutic," in *New Frontiers in Theology,* James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., eds., *The New Hermeneutic,* Vol. II (New

is more and more seeking points of contact with culture. We may note particularly his focus on "word-event" in relation to biblical texts, and the implications for contemporary interpretations.

Ebeling retains a Barthian stress upon the Word in correlation with faith, but refuses to set "Word of God" and "word of man" in sharp juxtaposition. Where love is shared and faith awakened, there a "word-event" has occurred. Hermeneutic is not, he believes, primarily a set of rules governing the exegesis of Scripture. It is concerned basically with the question of how the biblical text *"by means of the sermon becomes a hermeneutical aid in the understanding of present experience.* Where that happens radically, there the true word is utttered, and that in fact means God's word [italics supplied]."[7] In view of the brevity of this mention and its unavoidable omissions and ambiguities, we would like to commend Ebeling's effort to understand the truth of faith in much closer relation to the ordinary meaning of such terms as *word, truth,* and *reality.*

CURRENT TRENDS: 3. TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF SECULARITY

A third development should be mentioned even in such a highly condensed account. Here the link between faith and culture is a sociopolitical analysis of trends involved in our emerging technological, urbanized, and secularized society. A representative writer is Harvey Cox in *The Secular City.*[8] This contributes to a discussion already well under way, involving sharp criticism of existing Church structures and a search for new relevance in mission strategy and congregational forms.

Cox would like theology to open itself increasingly to politics and develop a new faith language accordingly. Theology, he believes, must take part in the processes of social change. It must engage in what Gibson Winter calls "theological reflection" or "coming to consciousness about the meaning of contemporary events in the light of history." "Reflection," says Cox, "is that act by which the church scrutinizes the issues the society confronts in light of those decisive events of the past—Exodus and Easter—in which the intent of God has been apprehended by man in faith."[9]

Cox believes, as do many others, that even as an inevitable fact of contemporary life, the movement toward secularity holds creative promise for an energetic Christian faith. This despite the fact that it also contains

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York: Harper & Row, 1964). Other important works by Ebeling are *The Nature of Faith,* Ronald Gregor Smith, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), and *Word and Faith,* James W. Leitch, trans. (London: SCM Press, 1963).

[7] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," p. 109.

[8] New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 254.

the danger of perversion as a closed secularism. Rather than oppose it in principle, the Church is challenged to find new life in this development. Obviously this is moving beyond mere descriptive sociological analysis[10] into the areas of value judgment and theological assessment.[11]

The point is that, if we are willing to accept as generally accurate this diagnosis of trends, the assessment of secularity is itself part of the contemporary debate. Are we are now living in "post-Christendom"—i.e., a cultural epoch in which life for growing numbers seems possible without what Bonhoeffer called the "God-hypothesis"? If so, it is urgent to evaluate the situation in terms of a relevant ministry and mission of the Church. It seems clear that modern Christian thought must make room for sustained reflection along these lines. We shall argue in more detail presently that theology must, in these days, be sensitive to pragmatic no less than metaphysical intuitions of truth, and approaches to it. Modern faith thinking, acting, and speaking may not find here its ultimate furnishings. But the search is surely proper for areas of common ground between the truth of faith and the truth of culture.

A FORWARD LOOK: THE NEW SHAPE OF THE TRUTH OF FAITH

The issues mentioned above serve to illustrate the fact that Christian belief today has turned a corner and is moving in new directions. The tradition we have traced from Descartes to Barth shows a vitality which itself leads to confidence that patterns both old and new will continue to interpenetrate and instruct each other. The way ahead is marked by the effort to get beyond the Cartesian dilemma of the isolated self trying to recover its world. The post-Cartesian understanding of faith as mutual engagement between subject and object will undoubtedly mark the new shape of truth in a more dramatic way than ever before.

Faith has too often tried to make itself secure in the elements of human personality, the dependability of nature, or the eternal character of values. It has sought to find some nook or cranny in the changing world where it can remain unaltered. A great deal of effort has gone into the attempt to preserve it against the inroads of unbelief. But today the chief difficulty for faith is not so much its lack of immunity against more

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[10] In this connection consult especially the work of Max Weber, Robert N. Bellah, and Talcott Parsons.

[11] See Arend Th. van Leeuwen, *Christianity in World History,* H. H. Hoskins, trans. (London: Edinburgh House and Press, 1965), for a somewhat similar theological reading of the emerging social scene. It is also in the interest of mobilizing the Church for more relevant mission in a modern secular world.

general conceptions of truth as its apparent isolation and separation from the life of man.

Faith that is genuinely secure knows its own center, but willingly moves into all areas that confront it. Faith plumbs the depth of change without trying to remain defensively detached. Evangelical liberalism, with its orientation to society, has always been in danger of losing its true center to a fluctuating environment. Existentialism, with its focus on authentic decision, always risks the loss of its roots in the real historical process. Neo-orthodoxy, with its strongly confessional tone, seems too ready to build a wall again between itself and the world. The truth of faith must be recovered in the profound interrelation of subject and object. The confessional center and engagement in everyday events must belong to each other.

Man does not simply handle what is external to him, comparing one object with another; he is also responsibly engaged in the world. Man does not simply make decisions in exaggerated isolation; his decisions reverberate throughout his world. Man cannot live a life of faith removed from the flux of historical change; for time itself is a fundamental mark of truth for him. The object of faith is no longer predominantly outside history, drawing man to itself. It is within time, open to historical change, always subject to reinterpretation within the movement of events.

The object of faith is a wholeness, a relatedness in the midst of time and historical circumstances. In this sense faith is confessional. It confesses one event among others as its own particular focus. The truth of faith becomes a new appreciation that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Far from being an isolated occurrence, this event in its concrete particularity is related to all other events. To confess this one event as the mark of truth is to accept wholeness and relatedness as existing in time, and open to the changing possibilities of history.

Thus faith rests primarily neither on the stabilities of nature, nor on the security of the self, but on an involved relatedness moving through concrete temporal events. Here the self becomes engaged with other selves in the world. Any failure to accept that engagement means isolation and turning in upon oneself. Thus the reality of both other persons and other things is basic to the self. Failure to acknowledge it results in distorting the world and unleashing its demonic possibilities.

The truth of faith is temporal and historical. Its sureness rests with the changing forms in which it finds itself. It cannot secretly move outside of its relation to time and stake out an independent certainty. Rather, it moves within the temporal process and is itself changed by it. It is revitalized in looking to the past, but it is oriented toward the future.

Faith is willing to engage in open exploration of its world because the

fullness of being in the world is thereby revealed. The relatedness of subject and object under the changing horizon of time means that everyday events, everyday language, and everyday things are open to responsible thought and activity. Faith is properly occupied in secular events. Secularity cannot destroy faith unless it takes the form of blocking the involvement of the self in its world.

CONCLUSION

Chapter Sixteen

THE NEW SHAPE OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The test of the Christian faith in any age is whether it can meet the challenge of its times. Christianity has in the past two millenia produced systems of thought that gave courage and hope to whole civilizations. One need only mention Augustine and Aquinas to recognize the extent to which Christian ideas have permeated Western culture. But the modern period has brought challenges to traditional ways of thinking that reverberate in every village and hamlet. We live in what is called a post-Christian age, or what might better be termed post-Christendom. "Christendom" we take as referring to a time and to wide areas of the world in which all cultural institutions and thought were very directly shaped by the Christian tradition.

The challenge of the contemporary period lies in a new awareness that we live in a changing history. We are witnesses to the rising drive for freedom of many peoples around the world. We are surrounded on every side by a new and largely scientific understanding of truth. The changes we have noted in this volume have involved a radical questioning of tradition. They raise serious doubt whether theology and philosophy can offer final solutions to any question.

The issue facing Christianity today is whether faith can give men confidence, direction, and hope without some of the elements it has taken for granted over the years. Does faith indeed depend on infallible Scriptures, universal ethical absolutes, and unalterable assertions of truth? These chapters have amply shown that such assurances—at least for many persons—are no longer a part of the times in which we live. We have traced various ways in which representative thinkers have wrestled with the problems resulting from these changes.

FACING THE CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGE

The faith-history story brought to light various efforts to preserve faith in the face of scientific historical research, with its focus upon verifiable

knowledge. Can faith really be tied to the factual event of Jesus Christ, when historical facts seem so tenuous in the hands of the critics? We discovered the following wide variations in how the meaning of *fact* has been understood in relation to faith. It has been seen as:

1. Secondhand information, subject to the accidents of perception and transmission, and thus inferior to the "Spirit and power" of a moral life.
2. An outward occurrence that at best can only illustrate the immediate inwardness of pure moral faith.
3. A lower level of consciousness, which can find fulfillment only when permeated by God-consciousness.
4. The passing, temporal form of existence in the midst of which an act of passionate inwardness marks the paradoxical character of faith.
5. Verifiable data and events that make an impact upon personality, through which communion of the soul with God may take place.
6. Objective hindrances that must be cleared away before one comes to the point of existential encounter.
7. Outward experimental details that are themselves the "real man," Jesus Christ, by virtue of the gracious, electing activity of God.

All these approaches take very seriously the impact of scientific investigation upon faith, an impact that Lessing reflected with classic clarity. Some are more willing than others to allow everyday matters of fact to be part of faith. But too often the effort is to shield faith even in the face of society's growing respect for factuality. Herrmann more than any other was willing to allow it to spring directly out of the events of the life of Christ. Yet even he made it clear that communion with God is somehow prior and more immediate.

The problem is as much with us today as ever. Along with those whose views we have briefly examined, we must affirm that faith is a personal decision, a form of courage, an activity that goes beyond mere factuality. But the vitality of faith today shows in its readiness to live within the earthliness of historical events, without denying their importance. Faith calls men to stand confidently within their temporal limitations. New insights will change the very ways in which we understand faith itself. We no longer need to protect it defensively. We can courageously accept the ordinary facts of history and of our lives, recognizing that here is where the guiding stabilities of faith are to be found.

The challenge of our times may also be seen in various views of the source of the *freedom* of faith that have emerged in our story.

1. Respect for moral law, unmixed with personal feeling or desire.
2. Natural social feeling, or desire to be in unity with one's fellow creatures.
3. Ethical decision, made individually and paradoxically in the midst of the universal requirements of moral law.

4. A conscience that adapts moral requirement of personality to the changing necessities of the social process.

5. Therapeutic release from the conscientiousness of the superego, which functions irrationally according to early parental demands.

6. The motivating power of grace and love by which, in an act of healing, the essential law of structure is made one with the estranging law of command.

7. Faith in Jesus Christ that gives freedom to act responsibly toward the neighbor, to the point of sharing his guilt.

The recognition of how radically life is shaped by its changing circumstances has forced Christians to revise their view of conscience. This used to be understood as a faculty within every man, more or less directly tuned in on the universal requirements of moral law. The Ten Commandments unquestionably reflect the nomadic-agricultural situations from which they arose. The attempt to root conscience in the freedom of human personality met its severest critic in Freud, who showed how fully the internal sense of obligation is molded by personal history. Inner feelings of moral demand may actually be destructive within the personality.

A basic issue today is whether Christian freedom can enter into and direct changing circumstances when many of the older standards are in question. The attempt to make an independent, universal freedom within the person according to tradition cannot do justice to Christian faith. As regards sexual morality, the population explosion coupled with new methods of birth control drives man back to the deeper questions of what genuine love of the neighbor is. The enlarged technical capacity for mass slaughter forces him to ask where his real responsibility lies. Freedom cannot come in isolation, in some sort of protected realm. It can only be found in the involvement of love in the changing personal, social, and political situations of the modern world. The very everyday event of Jesus of Nazareth cannot be divorced from an active caring for one another, in all the earthly striving and aspirations of life.

Another fundamental way to test the response of faith and ethics to the contemporary challenge is to ask: What kind of truth is faith? In what does it consist? How is it related to other truths? It will be recalled that the *truth* of faith has been described as deriving from a number of different sources, as follows.

1. The awareness of selfhood apprehended in the midst of procedural doubt. Implicitly in this certainty is found the idea of God.

2. The presence of all-inclusive Being, willingly and actively experienced in all life through the "sense of the heart."

3. Permeation of a person's entire experience by consciousness of absolute dependence and redemption in Jesus Christ.

4. The presence of Eternal Truth, crucified within temporal limitations, whose validation in human life occurs paradoxically through a movement of passionate inwardness.

5. Fundamental Being, deeper than mere outward existence, and its presence in the life of man.

6. Ultimate concern, which reaches beyond shallower human concerns in acceptance and love, thus giving life meaning, and healing the separation of subject and object.

7. The all-encompassing reality of genuine humanity, concretely expressed in Jesus Christ and fully present to belief and love by God's grace.

The search for truth involves the need to verify what is felt to be authentic. Science, with its stress on observation and control, has had such an impact that all ideas of the truth of faith must take this into account. Many since his time have followed Descartes quite closely in linking faith to the primal intuition of selfhood. But an equally powerful tradition has found the truth of faith in apprehension of an objective environment. Recent thinkers have tried to uncover an interrelation between man and his world that lies deeper than mere external connections and the detachment of the observer.

Certainly no one of these interpretations does full justice to the meaning of truth. Even as earlier views have their continuing power because of their involvement in specific times and places, so the contemporary search must explore its own circumstances, becoming attentive to life and thought in its everydayness. The relation of the thinker and the doer to his world may thereby become more functional; more open to the particular things that are happening now; and more sensitive to the past from which the present springs, and the future toward which it moves. The truth of faith will not abide in protective aloofness. Faith is responsible engagement. In man's relation to his total context he comes to know the depths of his selfhood. This fundamental relationship is something to be sought, acknowledged, and celebrated.

FAITH IN ITS EVERYDAY CONTEXT

We have repeatedly taken issue with ways of thinking and speaking about faith that remain isolated from concrete experience. Christian thought and language are properly seen as rooted in daily life, shaping and being shaped by it. Let us now try to illustrate how faith and the everyday aspects of personal-social existence intersect with respect to fact, obligation and truth.

The *language of history* is fact-oriented. The historian tries to reconstruct events. Even an informal handling of the past—as in our efforts

to describe what happened at some point in our experience—involves responsible attention to details. Whether in the more formal procedures of research with the aid of documents, or in the informal approach of personal autobiography, whoever speaks historically deals with matters of fact.

But issues of historical fact are at the same time intertwined with questions of meaning. We thus speak of Jesus of Nazareth—a man who lived and ministered in Palestine—as a fact which has obviously called forth varying interpretations. There has never been total agreement as to the precise meaning of this carpenter's life, especially in light of his humiliating death on a cross. For some it is part of an obscure episode from the past where just one more revolutionary met his fate. By others this man is seen as an heroic example, and calls forth ethical commitment and readiness to sacrifice. For still others Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of the deepest and best of life: he is actually the presence of divine Providence within history. The fact of his life and death evokes larger frames of significance, leading to the belief that he embodies God's own presence, power, and purpose. Those who hold this view are convinced that man's loftiest intuitions of what God intends for His creation were shaped and disciplined in the give-and-take of Israel's life-story, and took on historical concreteness in this carpenter from Nazareth.

How then does faith that is centered in Christ relate to the everyday meanings that make up daily life? Personal existence involves a great variety of "facts": the birth of a child, choice of a vocation, selection of a mate, place of home and work, family crises and joys, illness and death. So with social groupings. Here, too, we see facts: the conquest of a land, technological improvements, invasion by an alien culture, civil unrest, death of a president, exploration of space, and so on. Such facts serve as centers of memory, attention, and meaning. They actively impinge on the present, bringing with them shaping influences, persistent resolves, and new possibilities for thought and action. They interrelate with each other, reaching back into the distant past and acting as bridges for new meanings.

Any one of these fact-centers may stand out in its power to orient human affairs, either recurrently or for an indefinite time. When this happens, other clusters of meaning are caught up within the dominant and more inclusive frame. Precisely here the factuality of Christ becomes crucial. Where faith is strong and vital, the life of Jesus of Nazareth is just such an inclusive center of meaning, touching all else with its claims and promise.

Not that the significance of Christ comes as an alien or merely optional extra in the range of life's concerns. Rather, it reveals ordinary facts in their everydayness. For the factual reality of this man is rooted in the

earthiness of limitation and death, of hope and aspiration. Yet it has the potential of consistently gathering up these things into its own fulfillment. For example, this one life serves to point the current search for equality and justice in the civil rights movement toward that all-encompassing vision of a society where there "is neither Jew nor Greek . . . neither slave nor free . . . neither male nor female; for . . . all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

A vital faith is open and active at every critical moment in culture. The drive is not to bring Christ out of the past into a given social setting or circumstance. Nor yet to empty contemporary events of meaning by seeing them as points where the reality of Christ merely touches time as a "future" ideal. In the new direction of theology there is confidence that the meaning of Christ, in his factualness, is already present and powerful in human affairs. The Christ-event is not just a fixed point on the space-time continuum, to be reconstructed by research. It is a shaping, purposive presence *before* it is an historical problem requiring elaborate investigation.

At the same time, faith willingly endorses serious historical study of its roots in the past. This kind of research also helps to free the Christian for responsible engagement where everyday meanings are emerging and intersecting. This may be in the vision of an artist, the dedication of a homemaker, or the passion of a social reformer, and so forth. The smallest detail may point, in its own way, to that most inclusive cluster of meanings around the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Similar issues arise when we turn to the *language of freedom.* Here too we can think and speak in ways that are quite everyday, yet of utmost significance for the theological and ethical language that is part of the old Christian tradition. What we see as a primary element in experience is the ordering of personal inclination so as to serve a larger social purpose. In ordinary parlance we may speak of freedom as coming when individual passion merges with the conscience of the community in dedication to a significant cause. To be free is somehow to *want* to do what in fact one ought to do, judged by some more inclusive standard. If good health requires daily exercise, a person has freedom in ordering his life to include it. If justice supports the right of a man to live in any neighborhood, irrespective of color or creed, both individuals and groups experience freedom when their personal feelings and economic interests are made to serve the creation of open communities.

Contrary to what one might think, these everyday affairs do actually point toward, and are further deepened by, what is traditionally called "freedom in Christ." If Christ is the very embodiment of love of God and neighbor, then the freedom he gives comes to him who accepts the grace to act upon it. The claim and promise of Jesus' own victorious style of life are thus made his. This freedom knows both the constraint and the re-

lease of serving the neighbor in the name of love. It is the freedom that works toward the coming of God's kingdom of righteousness and peace.

The meaning of the Christ-event has its true power in relation to ordinary fact. In the same way, the fuller ethical vision of Christian freedom and its enabling grace must again and again be embodied in concrete instances along the way. A faith style that tries to think the meaning of ordinary experience in the light of Jesus Christ opens itself to life as fully as possible. In situations where obligation and desire are complementary, freedom is striving to be born. This pattern of discipleship seeks a way of life marked by brotherliness and good will. It has its eyes always on that divinely ordered community where "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). This is why the man of faith is so fittingly present at points in society where tension exists between what has been and what is beginning to emerge. These tensions we have always with us: between the desires of those who try to perpetuate privileges for themselves, and the requirement of an equitable social order. This is what draws the Christian into a campaign for open housing, a protest march against the war in Vietnam, a sit-in demonstration, or a program to give the dispossessed a larger share of political power.

The *language of truth,* we have seen at length, involves the interplay between "subject" and "object." But it is no longer necessary to think of them as wholly separate, with the lonely ego marked off from its world except for voluntary acts. The larger cultural context has shifted, in the long story from Descartes to Heidegger. We can now think of consciousness as a relational field, with subjective and objective factors in constant interaction.

The new direction in theology is toward a closer connection between the truth of faith and the truth of general experience. A nonspecialized understanding of truth might go something like this. It has to do with the accuracy of our assertions in relation to the way things really are. I say that the door is open. It is the truth, for in reality the door does stand ajar. In practical and functional terms, truth involves the alignment of life and speech with the way things are moving—are working out—are converging toward the enrichment of individual and social well-being. I not only speak but live the truth, when my actions enhance the life of others around me in all our relationships.

Again, the object of truth in these general terms is the fundamental focus or ground of life's direction and purpose. It is what one believes in most profoundly, is most deeply involved in and most willing to sacrifice for. It is what we regard as most worthy of confidence and dedication. It is what most authentically engages people with one another and with their world.

Think of the way the nation is often considered. Our country contrib-

utes profoundly to a sense of identity, as in the confident declaration, "I am an American." It gives us the assurance of belonging to a significant past. Somehow we feel caught up in the dramatic episodes that mark our history, and defined by them. We think of the pioneers arriving on the Mayflower, the ride of Paul Revere, the Declaration of Independence, westward expansion and conquest, the Gettysburg Address, defeat at Pearl Harbor, the death of President Kennedy. Since we so share a remembered past, we also have a quickened sense of meaning and conscience about what ought to be done in the present. And this connects us more self-consciously with the future. Because of what the nation has been and continues to be, we know who we are. We feel that our tomorrows will have some relation to our yesterdays.

Here we have identity, motivation, and sense of personal continuity supported by a focus of confidence and dedication. This is not unlike the way the truth of Christ functions in human affairs. This is not to say that the Christian sense of what is ultimately real, as defined by illuminating moments in the history of Israel and the man Jesus, merely endorses the status quo. Indeed, quite the opposite is often the case. Faith may challenge the sovereignty of a nation. After all, nations are neither eternal nor totally trustworthy. They decay and pass away. As the still vivid memories of the Nazis remind us, horrible things may happen when a nation claims total, uncritical loyalty. Where nationalism and patriotism become fanatical, where self-interest is used as an excuse for imperialistic aggression, the truth of Christ stands in stark opposition.

Speaking generally, thought and language about the purpose of God as judged by Christ support the human capacities that contribute to the total betterment of men. These capacities are identity-producing, energy-releasing, and life-orienting. But faith clearly brings a word of judgment where loyalty to the nation closes off the vision of a truer and still more inclusive style of humanity—where patriotic zeal is not open to that "city whose builder and maker is God." However, in spite of these qualifications, the nation as an "object of truth" is a good illustration of our point. At a general level, what we mean by truth is the fundamental center of meaning—the highest arbiter of right and wrong—the wholehearted motivation leading to responsible involvement—finally, the deep ground of mutuality and openness toward one another, in the conviction that thus we are faithful to what is ultimately real.

In some ways it is easier to illustrate the impingement of faith on everyday affairs in matters of history or freedom than of truth. This is because fact and obligation together provide much of the concrete detail for our sense of what is fundamentally real: the ground of life's basic purpose. One can more readily find an anchor in the daily routine for "Jesus-language" and "ethical language" than for "God-language," which is where the question of the truth of faith emerges most sharply. Speech

about God has the character of a fundamental presupposition. What we designate by the word God is basic to our own immediate identity, our sense of right and wrong, power to act responsibly, involvement with other persons, and continuity as selves in the midst of change. Its meaning is often more implicit than explicit. In referring to the ultimate "truth object" by which we live—whether called "God" or not—we are dealing with that basic center of meaning in whose light all lesser truth claims are themselves judged.

The faith style needed today gives careful attention to presuppositions about what is deeply trustworthy, capable of engaging us in all of life with fidelity and confidence. The meaning of the Christ-event, including the ethical power released in his life and death, is disclosed in the midst of everyday facts and obligations. So, too, the truth of faith lives in the closest possible connection with workaday assumptions about what is ultimately real. When, therefore, we say that the purpose of God has been made plain in Jesus Christ, our speech has vividness and vitality. This releases language about God and His purpose from its aloofness, bringing it into the earthy, even grubby details of daily life.

Again, consider the matter of scientific technology, with its promise of ever greater things to come. This "object of truth" may seem more immediate and tangible than all our talk about the things of God. Technology gives us personal centeredness, suggesting in a thousand ways that we are capable of shaping our own destiny, whether for good or ill. It dictates values and establishes goals whose attainment requires intense discipline. Imagine the heavy investment of time, talent, and wealth for space exploration! To say nothing of our expenditure for cars, household appliances, clothing, shelter, and all sorts of recreational aids. Harnessed and packaged by the world of business, technology holds out the prospect of still more exciting discoveries and material delights.

Here again, so long as it genuinely contributes to the welfare of men and nations, technology is not on an inevitable collision course with the Christian faith. Who can deny the potential for improving the total human situation? Who would want to belittle the ever expanding ramifications for health, transportation, education, leisure, comfort, and general security? But a mismanaged technology can foster massive dehumanization. It can serve the interests of narrow nationalism and aggression, or divert energies from pressing worldwide problems. Where it does these things, the truth of faith must cry out in the name of a fuller vision of what is ultimately real.

RESPONSIBILITY AND HISTORICAL CHANGE

The twentieth century with its bloodshed, totalitarianism, racism, medical advances, space exploration, and atomic research presents a riotously

mixed, kaleidoscopic picture. Do we live in a doomed or a progressively enlightened time? Have we reason to hope, or only to despair? Should we seek to remove ourselves spiritually from an age of destruction, even though our bodies remain trapped? Or should we throw ourselves into scientific research, the quest for human rights, and the struggle for world peace, in the hope that civilization may yet survive?

There is no simple answer to any of these questions. Certainly the impact of the scientific approach cannot be stayed, nor can the pace of urbanization and technological sophistication. We cannot deny the benefits of such developments, nor should we regard the empirical leanings of many today as intrinsically unfaithful. Even when faith is open to such matters, or when the critical procedures of science are turned toward the Church and its patterns, the believer need not wince. The vitality that moves the disciplined inquirer is one of the greatest forces for the renewal of Christianity in our day. It is urgent that faith should spend less time than it now does in shielding itself from the contemporary world, with its down-to-earth temper. For this is the very soil in which it grows best.

There is a certain paradoxical contrast between changing circumstances and the faith that lives in their midst. Faith does indeed go beyond factuality, but it is not thereby removed from it. Faith draws men into the events of life with all their varying interpretations. It is a false effort to try to preserve the Scriptures from critical studies, or to insist that faith is quite independent of such pursuits. The faith that gives courage and direction can thrive with only minimal understanding. A wealth of technical knowledge, on the other hand, may lack the vitality of faith. But faith persistently draws people into fuller realms of understanding, and disciplined knowledge may contribute to the total enrichment of life.

In Christ's resurrection the earthy details of this man's life and death become fully linked with the motives of all those who follow him, in whatever time. Therefore faith is not embarrassed to live with changing interpretations and the risks that genuine involvement in temporal limitation always brings. Faith lives in the everydayness of the modern world without being threatened by the coming of new freedoms and truths.

Because of the destructive potentialities of this age, it is imperative to remember that we move out of a past that has been marred by serious failures. Yet we look toward a brighter tomorrow. The present is a very mixed affair, and the future no utopian paradise. But every new day holds an as yet unrealized possibility that is the hope of faith. This means that men are drawn responsibly into their times, even in the face of destruction and death. For they know that the winds of a new freedom, too, are blowing in the scientific, technological, and urban trends of the twentieth century.

The truth of faith moves against the untruth that is always active in history. There is no automatic assurance of progress. Still, the believer is joined with his fellow believer and all men, actively awaiting the coming of that new order of things whose promise is already evident. The responsible faith works toward the society that is foreshadowed in Jesus Christ. The contemporary disciple dare not merely rest upon his laurels, contemplating revelation from afar. The issues of human rights, racial justice, urban planning, and international peace are not trivial for faith. Why are we so lethargic in these areas? Why is our faith so ineffectual at such points of emerging meaning, freedom, and truth?

Only occasionally is a man like Martin Luther King enabled to join his own personal passions to the larger movement for true brotherhood. But at once we catch a glimpse of the power of Christian freedom and truth. For most of us a great gulf exists between what ought to be and what is actually done. Yet rather than passively lamenting the all-too-evident tyranny of evil, we would do better to look closely at those times and places—Buchenwald, Worms, Jerusalem—where even in the midst of man's betrayals another power is present, a power of grace that we have called the freedom of faith.

Far from lifting men out of their daily circumstances, faith calls for responsibility *within* historical change. The social and political realities are arenas of engagement for faith. The people of the Urals, South Africa, and Southeast Asia are not neutrally detached from us, subject to our manipulation and control. These people, like all others, are fundamentally involved in us and we in them. If we understand the truth of faith as mutuality and openness to each other, this means that no part of mankind is to be separated for exploitation and domination. Faith is constrained to speak out strongly, wherever and whenever an apparent social or political necessity—or even a spurious freedom—would set aside the caring of one man for another. The truth we know in Christ means a responsible concern in all the different situations of life.

CONCLUSION

The person who thinks and acts as a Christian is thus open to everyday meanings, ethical aspirations, and fundamental presuppositions. He has within himself the desire both to respect them in their own right and to evaluate critically their adequacy in the light of Christ. This light shines as a meaning for the present, as normativeness and motivating power, as the embodiment of life's ultimate purpose. We have seen very real tensions between faith and culture. But the witness of faith belongs at the very points where new meanings are emerging, where enlarged freedoms are struggling to be born, and where fundamental intuitions of

man's nature and destiny can become effective in the ordering of his interests and energies.

Change often appears as a threat. This is particularly true when it concerns the most basic things in life. We have tried to show, however, that it is also the vehicle of promise. If change consigns some ways of thinking and speaking to the past, it also brings with it creative challenges and possibilities for faith and life. In this volume we have been able to live imaginatively through a part of the many-faceted story of Christian thought, sensing the transformations within its continuities. Faith is centered in Jesus Christ as he is known in a supporting tradition. This is itself subject to refocusing in relation to its historic center, even as it facilitates orderly change in response to new situations.

So centered, the man of faith can take his stand within the long movement of history, in openness to new "fact" orientations. He can think and act in personal-social life at points—intersections of life—where "obligation" is ordering human inclination toward a more adequate and inclusive freedom. He can witness boldly to the basic insights by which human beings and communities may be judged as genuinely aligned with "objective" reality and purpose. In this way he is not only shaped by Christian thought in its ongoing development, but contributes responsibly to the shaping of it.

Past views of faith have been appropriate in their historical circumstances. So, today, faith must give us the courage to be involved in our own times. It must arm us to move beyond destructive nationalism and to meet radical technological and urban developments. It must help us to engage responsibly in the exploration of man's spatial mobility as well as his biological and mental potentialities. Faith must strengthen us to resolve the conflicts between major world religions and to find solutions to worldwide racial and economic struggles. Finally, it must maintain the deep confidence in the midst of chaotic possibilities that can allow itself to be reshaped and refashioned in the process. The new era in theology will need to work out just how faith will be expressed, but concepts of historicity, responsibility, and relatedness will certainly be central.

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